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THE MASTER
OF
BALLANTRAE

BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

AUTHOR'S EDITION

1888

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THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS DURING THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS.

THE full truth of this odd matter is what the world has long been looking for and public curiosity is sure to welcome. It so befell that I was intimately mingled with the last years and history of the house ; and there does not live one man so able as myself to make these matters plain, or so desirous to narrate them faithfully. I knew the Master ; on many secret steps of his career, I have an authentic memoir in my hand ; I sailed with him on his last voyage almost alone ; I made one upon that winter's journey of which so many tales have gone abroad ; and I was there at the man's death. As for my late Lord Durrissdeer, I served him and loved him near twenty years ; and thought more of him the more I knew of him. Altogether, I think it not fit that so much evidence should perish ; the truth is a debt I owe my lord's memory ; and I think my old years will flow more smoothly and my white hair lie quieter on the pillow, when the debt is paid.

The Duries of Durrisdeer and Ballantrae were a strong family in the southwest from the days of David First. A rhyme still current in the countryside—

Kittle folk are the Durrisdeers,
They ride wi' ower mony spears—

bears the mark of its antiquity ; and the name appears in another, which common report attributes to Thomas of Ercildoune himself—I cannot say how truly, and which some have applied—I dare not say with how much justice—to the events of this narration :

Twa Duries in Durrisdeer,
Ane to tie and ane to ride,
An ill day for the groom
And a waur day for the bride.

Authentic history besides is filled with their exploits which (to our modern eyes) seem not very commendable ; and the family suffered its full share of those ups and downs to which the great houses of Scotland have been ever liable. But all these I pass over, to come to that memorable year 1745, when the foundations of this tragedy were laid.

At that time there dwelt a family of four persons in the house of Durrisdeer, near St. Bride's, on the Solway shore ; a chief hold of their race since the reformation. My old lord, eighth of the name, was not old in years, but he suffered prematurely from the disabilities of age ; his place was at the chimney side ; there he sat reading, in

a lined gown, with few words for any man, and wry words for none : the model of an old retired housekeeper ; and yet his mind very well nourished with study, and reputed in the country to be more cunning than he seemed. The Master of Ballantrae, James in baptism, took from his father the love of serious reading ; some of his tact perhaps as well, but that which was only policy in the father became black dissimulation in the son. The face of his behaviour was merely popular and wild : he sat late at wine, later at the cards ; had the name in the country of “an unco man for the lasses” ; and was ever in the front of broils. But for all he was the first to go in, yet it was observed he was invariably the best to come off ; and his partners in mischief were usually alone to pay the piper. This luck or dexterity got him several ill-wishers, but with the rest of the country, enhanced his reputation ; so that great things were looked for in his future, when he should have gained more gravity. One very black mark he had to his name ; but the matter was hushed up at the time, and so defaced by legends before I came into those parts, that I scruple to set it down. If it was true, it was a horrid fact in one so young ; and if false, it was a horrid calumny. I think it notable that he had always vaunted himself quite implacable, and was taken at his word ; so that he had the addition among his neighbours of “an ill man to cross.” Here was altogether a young nobleman (not yet twenty-four in the year ’45) who had made a figure

in the country beyond his time of life. The less marvel if there were little heard of the second son, Mr. Henry (my late Lord Durrisdeer), who was neither very bad nor yet very able, but an honest, solid sort of lad like many of his neighbours. Little heard, I say ; but indeed it was a case of little spoken. He was known among the salmon fishes in the firth, for that was a sport that he assiduously followed ; he was an excellent good horse-doctor besides ; and took a chief hand, almost from a boy, in the management of the estates. How hard a part that was, in the situation of that family, none knows better than myself ; nor yet with how little colour of justice a man may there acquire the reputation of a tyrant and a miser. The fourth person in the house was Miss Alison Graeme, a near kinswoman, an orphan, and the heir to a considerable fortune which her father had acquired in trade. This money was loudly called for by my lord's necessities ; indeed the land was deeply mortgaged ; and Miss Alison was designed accordingly to be the Master's wife, gladly enough on her side ; with how much good will on his, is another matter. She was a comely girl and in those days very spirited and self-willed ; for the old lord having no daughter of his own, and my lady being long dead, she had grown up as best she might.

To these four, came the news of Prince Charlie's landing, and set them presently by the ears. My lord, like the chimney-keeper that he was, was all for temporising. Miss Alison held the other side, because it appeared

romantical ; and the Master (though I have heard they did not agree often) was for this once of her opinion. The adventure tempted him, as I conceive ; he was tempted by the opportunity to raise the fortunes of the house, and not less by the hope of paying off his private liabilities, which were heavy beyond all opinion. As for Mr. Henry, it appears he said little enough at first ; his part came later on. It took the three a whole day's disputation, before they agreed to steer a middle course, one son going forth to strike a blow for King James, my lord and the other staying at home to keep in favour with King George. Doubtless this was my lord's decision ; and as is well known, it was the part played by many considerable families. But the one dispute settled, another opened. For my lord, Miss Alison and Mr. Henry all held the one view : that it was the cadet's part to go out ; and the Master, what with restlessness and vanity, would at no rate consent to stay at home. My lord pleaded, Miss Alison wept, Mr. Henry was very plain spoken : all was of no avail.

“It is the direct heir of Durrisdeer that should ride by his King's bridle,” says the Master.

“If we were playing a manly part,” says Mr. Henry, “there might be sense in such talk. But what are we doing ? Cheating at cards !”

“We are saving the house of Durrisdeer, Henry,” his father said.

“And see, James,” said Mr. Henry, “if I go, and

the Prince has the upper hand, it will be easy to make your peace with King James. But if you go, and the expedition fails, we divide the right and the title. And what shall I be then ?”

“You will be Lord Durrisdeer,” said the Master. “I put all I have upon the table.”

“I play at no such game,” cries Mr. Henry. “I shall be left in such a situation as no man of sense and honour could endure. I shall be neither fish nor flesh !” he cried. And a little after, he had another expression, plainer perhaps than he intended. “It is your duty to be here with my father,” said he. “You know well enough you are the favourite.”

“Ay ?” said the Master. “And there spoke Envy ! Would you trip up my heels—Jacob ?” said he, and dwelled upon the name maliciously.

Mr. Henry went and walked at the low end of the hall without reply ; for he had an excellent gift of silence. Presently he came back.

“I am the cadet and I *should* go,” said he. “And my lord here is the master, and he says I *shall* go. What say ye to that, my brother ?”

“I say this, Harry,” returned the Master, “that when very obstinate folk are met, there are only two ways out : Blows—and I think none of us could care to go so far ; or the arbitrament of chance—and here is a guinea piece. Will you stand by the toss of the coin ?”

“I will stand and fall by it,” said Mr. Henry.
“Heads, I go ; shield, I stay.”

The coin was spun and it fell shield. “So there is a lesson for Jacob,” says the Master.

“We shall live to repent of this,” says Mr. Henry, and flung out of the hall.

As for Miss Alison, she caught up that piece of gold which had just sent her lover to the wars, and flung it clean through the family shield in the great painted window.

“If you loved me as well as I love you, you would have stayed,” cried she.

“‘I could not love you, dear, so well, loved I not honour more,’” sang the Master.

“O !” she cried, “you have no heart—I hope you may be killed !” and she ran from the room, and in tears to her own chamber.

It seems the Master turned to my lord with his most comical manner, and says he, “This looks like a devil of a wife.”

“I think you are a devil of a son to me,” cried his father, “you that has always been the favourite, to my shame be it spoken. Never a good hour have I gotten of you, since you were born ; no, never one good hour,” and repeated it again the third time. Whether it was the Master’s levity, or his insubordination, or Mr. Henry’s word about the favourite son, that had so much disturbed my lord, I do not know ; but I incline to

think it was the last, for I have it by all accounts that Mr. Henry was more made up to from that hour.

Altogether it was in pretty ill blood with his family that the Master rode to the north ; which was the more sorrowful for others to remember when it seemed too late. By fear and favour, he had scraped together near upon a dozen men, principally tenants' sons ; they were all pretty full when they set forth, and rode up the hill by the old abbey, roaring and singing, the white cockade in every hat. It was a desperate venture for so small a company to cross the most of Scotland unsupported ; and (what made folk think so the more) even as that poor dozen was clattering up the hill, a great ship of the king's navy, that could have brought them under with a single boat, lay with her broad ensign streaming in the bay. The next afternoon, having given the Master a fair start, it was Mr. Henry's turn ; and he rode off, all by himself, to offer his sword and carry letters from his father to King George's government. Miss Alison was shut in her room and did little but weep, till both were gone ; only she stitched the cockade upon the Master's hat and (as John Paul told me) it was wetted with tears when he carried it down to him.

In all that followed, Mr. Henry and my old lord were true to their bargain. That ever they accomplished anything is more than I could learn ; and that they were anyway strong on the king's side, more than I be-

lieve. But they kept the letter of loyalty, corresponded with my Lord President, sat still at home, and had little or no commerce with the Master while that business lasted. Nor was he, on his side, more communicative. Miss Alison, indeed, was always sending him expresses, but I do not know if she had many answers. Macconochie rode for her once, and found the Highlanders before Carlisle, and the Master riding by the Prince's side in high favour; he took the letter (so Macconochie tells), opened it, glanced it through with a mouth like a man whistling, and stuck it in his belt, whence, on his horse passageing, it fell unregarded to the ground. It was Macconochie who picked it up; and he still kept it, and indeed I have seen it in his hands. News came to Durrisdeer of course, by the common report, as it goes travelling through a country, a thing always wonderful to me. By that means the family learned more of the Master's favour with the Prince, and the ground it was said to stand on: for by a strange condescension in a man so proud—only that he was a man still more ambitious—he was said to have crept into notability by truckling to the Irish. Sir Thomas Sullivan, Colonel Burke and the rest were his daily comrades, by which course he withdrew himself from his own country folk. All the small intrigues, he had a hand in fomenting; thwarted my Lord George upon a thousand points; was always for the advice that seemed palatable to the Prince, no matter if it was good

or bad ; and seems upon the whole (like the gambler he was all through life) to have had less regard to the chances of the campaign than to the greatness of favour he might aspire to, if (by any luck) it should succeed. For the rest, he did very well in the field ; no one questioned that ; for he was no coward.

The next was the news of Culloden, which was brought to Durrisdeer by one of the tenant's sons, the only survivor, he declared, of all those that had gone singing up the hill. By an unfortunate chance, John Paul and Macconochie had that very morning found the guinea piece (which was the root of all the evil) sticking in a holly bush ; they had been "up the gait," as the servants say at Durrisdeer, to the change house ; and if they had little left of the guinea, they had less of their wits. What must John Paul do, but burst into the hall where the family sat at dinner, and cry the news to them that "Tam Macmorland was but new lichtit at the door, and—wirra, wirra—there were nane to come behind him" ?

They took the word in silence like folk condemned ; only Mr. Henry carrying his palm to his face, and Miss Alison laying her head outright upon her hands. As for my lord, he was like ashes.

"I have still one son," says he. "And Henry, I will do you this justice, it is the kinder that is left."

It was a strange thing to say in such a moment : but my lord had never forgotten Mr. Henry's speech, and

he had years of injustice on his conscience. Still it was a strange thing; and more than Miss Alison could let pass. She broke out and blamed my lord for his unnatural words, and Mr. Henry because he was sitting there in safety when his brother lay dead, and herself because she had given her sweetheart ill words at his departure; calling him the flower of the flock, wringing her hands, protesting her love, and crying on him by his name; so that the servants stood astonished.

Mr. Henry got to his feet and stood holding his chair; it was he that was like ashes now.

“O,” he burst out suddenly, “I know you loved him!”

“The world knows that, glory be to God!” cries she; and then to Mr. Henry: “There is none but me to know one thing—that you were a traitor to him in your heart.”

“God knows,” groans he, “it was lost love on both sides.”

Time went by in the house after that, without much change; only they were now three instead of four, which was a perpetual reminder of their loss. Miss Alison’s money, you are to bear in mind, was highly needful for the estates; and the one brother being dead, my old lord soon set his heart upon her marrying the other. Day in, day out, he would work upon her, sitting by the chimney side with his finger in his Latin book, and his eyes set upon her face with a kind of pleasant

intentness that became the old gentleman very well. If she wept, he would condole with her, like an ancient man that has seen worse times and begins to think lightly even of sorrow ; if she raged, he would fall to reading again in his Latin book, but always with some civil excuse ; if she offered (as she often did) to let them have her money in a gift, he would show her how little it consisted with his honour, and remind her, even if he should consent, that Mr. Henry would certainly refuse. *Non vi sed sæpe cadendo* was a favourite word of his ; and no doubt this quiet persecution wore away much of her resolve ; no doubt, besides, he had a great influence on the girl, having stood in the place of both her parents ; and for that matter, she was herself filled with the spirit of the Duries, and would have gone a great way for the glory of Durrisdeer ; but not so far, I think, as to marry my poor patron, had it not been (strangely enough) for the circumstance of his extreme unpopularity.

This was the work of Tam Macmorland. There was not much harm in Tam ; but he had that grievous weakness, a long tongue ; and as the only man in that country who had been out (or rather who had come in again) he was sure of listeners. Those that have the underhand in any fighting, I have observed, are ever anxious to persuade themselves they were betrayed. By Tam's account of it, the rebels had been betrayed at every turn and by every officer they had ; they had been

betrayed at Derby, and betrayed at Falkirk ; the night march was a step of treachery of my Lord George's ; Culloden was lost by the treachery of the Macdonalds. This habit of imputing treason grew upon the fool, till at last he must have in Mr. Henry also. Mr. Henry (by his account) had betrayed the lads of Durrisddeer ; he had promised to follow with more men, and instead of that he had ridden to King George. "Ay, and the next day !" Tam would cry. "The puir, bonnie Master and the puir, kind lads that ra'de wi' him, were hardly ower the scaur, or he was aff—the Judis ! Ay, weel—he has his way o't : he's to be my lord, nae less, and there's mony a cauld corp amang the Hieland heather !" And at this, if Tam had been drinking, he would begin to weep.

Let anyone speak long enough, he will get believers. This view of Mr. Henry's behaviour crept about the country by little and little ; it was talked upon by folk that knew the contrary but were short of topics ; and it was heard and believed and given out for gospel by the ignorant and the ill-willing. Mr. Henry began to be shunned ; yet awhile, and the commons began to murmur as he went by, and the women (who are always the most bold because they are the most safe) to cry out their reproaches to his face. The Master was cried up for a saint. It was remembered how he had never any hand in pressing the tenants ; as, indeed, no more he had, except to spend the money. He was a

little wild perhaps, the folk said ; but how much better was a natural, wild lad that would soon have settled down, than a skinflint and a sneckdraw, sitting, with his nose in an account book, to persecute poor tenants. One trollop, who had had a child to the Master and by all accounts been very badly used, yet made herself a kind of champion of his memory. She flung a stone one day at Mr. Henry.

“Whaur’s the bonnie lad that trustit ye ?” she cried.

Mr. Henry reined in his horse and looked upon her, the blood flowing from his lip. “Ay, Jess ?” says he. “You too ? And yet ye should ken me better.” For it was he who had helped her with money.

The woman had another stone ready, which she made as if she would cast ; and he, to ward himself, threw up the hand that held his riding rod.

“What, would ye beat a lassie, ye ugly —— ?” cries she, and ran away screaming as though he had struck her.

Next day, word went about the country like wildfire that Mr. Henry had beaten Jessie Broun within an inch of her life. I give it as one instance of how this snowball grew and one calumny brought another ; until my poor patron was so perished in reputation that he began to keep the house like my lord. All this while, you may be very sure he uttered no complaints at home ; the very ground of the scandal was too sore a matter to be handled ; and Mr. Henry was very proud and strangely

obstinate in silence. My old lord must have heard of it, by John Paul, if by no one else ; and he must at least have remarked the altered habits of his son. Yet even he, it is probable, knew not how high the feeling ran ; and as for Miss Alison, she was ever the last person to hear news, and the least interested when she heard them.

In the height of the ill-feeling (for it died away as it came, no man could say why) there was an election forward in the town of St. Bride's, which is the next to Durrisdier, standing on the Water of Swift ; some grievance was fermenting, I forget what, if ever I heard ; and it was currently said there would be broken heads ere night, and that the sheriff had sent as far as Dumfries for soldiers. My lord moved that Mr. Henry should be present ; assuring him it was necessary to appear, for the credit of the house. "It will soon be reported," said he, "that we do not take the lead in our own country."

"It is a strange lead that I can take," said Mr. Henry ; and when they had pushed him further, "I tell you the plain truth," he said, "I dare not show my face."

"You are the first of the house that ever said so," cries Miss Alison.

"We will go all three," said my lord ; and sure enough he got into his boots (the first time in four years—a sore business John Paul had to get them on) and Miss Alison into her riding coat, and all three rode together to St. Bride's.

The streets were full of the riff-raff of all the countryside, who had no sooner clapped eyes on Mr. Henry than the hissing began, and the hooting, and the cries of "Judas !" and "Where was the Master ?" and "Where were the poor lads that rode with him ?" Even a stone was cast ; but the more part cried shame at that, for my old lord's sake and Miss Alison's. It took not ten minutes to persuade my lord, that Mr. Henry had been right. He said never a word, but turned his horse about, and home again, with his chin upon his bosom. Never a word said Miss Alison ; no doubt she thought the more ; no doubt her pride was stung, for she was a bone-bred Durie ; and no doubt her heart was touched to see her cousin so unjustly used. That night she was never in bed ; I have often blamed my lady—when I call to mind that night, I readily forgive her all ; and the first thing in the morning, she came to the old lord in his usual seat.

"If Henry still wants me," said she, "he can have me now." To himself she had a different speech : "I bring you no love, Henry ; but God knows, all the pity in the world."

June the first, 1748, was the day of their marriage. It was December of the same year that first saw me alighting at the doors of the great house ; and from there I take up the history of events as they befell under my own observation, like a witness in a court.

I.

I MADE the last of my journey in the cold end of December, in a mighty dry day of frost ; and who should be my guide but Patey Macmorland, brother of Tom ? For a tow-headed, bare-legged brat of ten, he had more ill tales upon his tongue than ever I heard the match of ; having drunken betimes in his brother's cup. I was still not so old myself ; pride had not yet the upperhand of curiosity ; and indeed it would have taken any man, that cold morning, to hear all the old clashes of the country and be shown all the places by the way where strange things had fallen out. I had tales of Claverhouse, as we came through the bogs, and tales of the devil as we came over the top of the scaur. As we came in by the old abbey I heard somewhat of the old monks, and more of the freetraders, who use its ruins for a magazine, landing for that cause within a cannon-shot of Durrisdeer ; and along all the road, the Duries and poor Mr. Henry were in the first rank for slander. My mind was thus highly prejudiced against the family I was about to serve ; so that I was half surprised, when I beheld Durrisdeer itself, lying in a pretty sheltered bay, under the Abbey Hill ; the house most commodiously built in the French fashion or perhaps Italianate, for I have

no skill in these arts ; and the place the most beautified with gardens, lawns, shrubberies, and trees I had ever seen. The money sunk here unproductively would have quite restored the family ; but as it was, it cost a revenue to keep it up.

Mr. Henry came himself to the door to welcome me : a tall, dark young gentleman (the Duries are all black men) of a plain and not cheerful face, very strong in body but not so strong in health : taking me by the hand without any pride, and putting me at home with plain, kind speeches. He led me into the hall, booted as I was, to present me to my lord. It was still daylight ; and the first thing I observed was a lozenge of clear glass in the midst of the shield in the painted window, which I remember thinking a blemish on a room otherwise so handsome, with its family portraits, and the pargetted ceiling with pendants, and the carved chimney, in one corner of which my old lord sat reading in his Livy. He was like Mr. Henry, with much the same plain countenance, only more subtle and pleasant, and his talk a thousand times more entertaining. He had many questions to ask me, I remember, of Edinburgh College, where I had just received my mastership of arts, and of the various professors, with whom and their proficiency he seemed well acquainted ; and thus, talking of things that I knew, I soon got liberty of speech in my new home.

In the midst of this, came Mrs. Henry into the room ; she was very far gone, Miss Katharine being due in

about six weeks, which made me think less of her beauty at the first sight ; and she used me with more of condescension than the rest ; so that, upon all accounts, I kept her in the third place of my esteem.

It did not take long before all Pate Macmorland's tales were blotted out of my belief, and I was become, what I have ever since remained, a loving servant of the house of Durrisdeer. Mr. Henry had the chief part of my affection. It was with him I worked ; and I found him an exacting master, keeping all his kindness for those hours in which we were unemployed, and in the steward's office not only loading me with work but viewing me with a shrewd supervision. At length one day, he looked up from his paper with a kind of timidness, and says he, "Mr. Mackellar, I think I ought to tell you that you do very well." That was my first word of commendation ; and from that day his jealousy of my performance was relaxed ; soon it was "Mr. Mackellar" here, and "Mr. Mackellar" there, with the whole family ; and for much of my service at Durrisdeer, I have transacted everything at my own time and to my own fancy, and never a farthing challenged. Even while he was driving me, I had begun to find my heart go out to Mr. Henry ; no doubt, partly in pity, he was a man so palpably unhappy. He would fall into a deep muse over our accounts, staring at the page or out of the window ; and at those times the look of his face, and the sigh that would break from him, awoke in me strong feelings of

curiosity and commiseration. One day, I remember, we were late upon some business in the steward's room. This room is in the top of the house and has a view upon the bay, and over a little wooded cape, on the long sands ; and there, right over against the sun which was then dipping, we saw the freetraders with a great force of men' and horses, scouring on the beach. Mr. Henry had been staring straight west, so that I marvelled he was not blinded by the sun ; suddenly he frowns, rubs his hand upon his brow, and turns to me with a smile.

“You would not guess what I was thinking,” says he. “I was thinking I would be a happier man if I could ride and run the danger of my life, with these lawless companions.”

I told him I had observed he did not enjoy good spirits ; and that it was a common fancy to envy others and think we should be the better of some change ; quoting Horace to the point, like a young man fresh from college.

“Why, just so,” said he. “And with that we may get back to our accounts.”

It was not long before I began to get wind of the causes that so much depressed him. Indeed a blind man must have soon discovered there was a shadow on that house, the shadow of the Master of Ballantrae. Dead or alive (and he was then supposed to be dead) that man was his brother's rival : his rival abroad, where there was never a good word for Mr. Henry and nothing but

regret and praise for the Master ; and his rival at home, not only with his father and his wife, but with the very servants.

There were two old serving men, who were the leaders. John Paul, a little, bald, solemn, stomachy man, a great professor of piety and (take him for all in all) a pretty faithful servant, was the chief of the Master's faction. None durst go so far as John. He took a pleasure in disregarding Mr. Henry publicly, often with a slighting comparison. My lord and Mrs. Henry took him up, to be sure, but never so resolutely as they should ; and he had only to pull his weeping face and begin his lamentations for the Master—"his laddie," as he called him—to have the whole condoned. As for Henry, he let these things pass in silence, sometimes with a sad and sometimes with a black look. There was no rivalling the dead, he knew that ; and how to censure an old serving man for a fault of loyalty, was more than he could see. His was not the tongue to do it.

Macconochie was chief upon the other side ; an old, ill-spoken, swearing, ranting, drunken dog ; and I have often thought it an odd circumstance in human nature, that these two serving men should each have been the champion of his contrary, and blackened their own faults and made light of their own virtues when they beheld them in a master. Macconochie had soon smelled out my secret inclination, took me much into his confidence, and would rant against the Master by the hour,

so that even my work suffered. “‘They’re a’ daft here,” he would cry, “and be damned to them ! The Master—the deil’s in their thrapples that should call him sae ! it’s Mr. Henry should be master now ! There were nane sae fond o’ the Master when they had him, I’ll can tell ye that. Sorrow on his name ! Never a guid word did I hear on his lips, nor naebody else, but just fleering and flyting and profane cursing—deil ha’e him ! There’s nane kent his wickedness : him a gentleman ! Did ever ye hear tell, Mr. Mackellar, o’ Wully White the wabster ? No ? Aweel, Wully was an unco praying kind o’ man ; a driegh body, nane o’ my kind, I never could abide the sight o’ him ; onyway he was a great hand by his way of it, and he up and rebukit the Master for some of his on-goings. It was a grand thing for the Master o’ Ball’ntrae to tak up a feud wi’ a’ wabster, wasnae’t ?” Macconochie would sneer ; indeed he never took the full name upon his lips but with a sort of a whine of hatred. “But he did ! A fine employ it was : chapping at the man’s door, and crying ‘boo’ in his lum, and puttin’ pooter in his fire, and pee-oys* in his window ; till the man thocht it was auld Hornie was come seekin’ him. Weel, to mak a lang story short, Wully gaed gyte. At the hinder end, they couldnae get him frae his knees, but he just roared and prayed and grat straucht on, till he got his release. It was fair

* A kind of firework made with damp powder.

murder, a'boday said that. Ask John Paul—he was brawly ashamed o' that game, him that's sic a Christian man ! Grand doin's for the Master o' Ball'ntrae !” I asked him what the Master had thought of it himself. “How could I ken ?” says he. “He never said naething.” And on again in his usual manner of banning and swearing, with every now and again a “Master of Ballantrae” sneered through his nose. It was in one of these confidences, that he showed me the Carlisle letter, the print of the horse shoe still stamped in the paper. Indeed that was our last confidence ; for he then expressed himself so ill-naturedly of Mrs. Henry, that I had to reprimand him sharply, and must thenceforth hold him at a distance.

My old lord was uniformly kind to Mr. Henry ; he had even pretty ways of gratitude, and would sometimes clap him on the shoulder and say, as if to the world at large : “This is a very good son to me.” And grateful he was no doubt, being a man of sense and justice. But I think that was all, and I am sure Mr. Henry thought so. The love was all for the dead son. Not that this was often given breath to ; indeed with me but once. My lord had asked me one day how I got on with Mr. Henry, and I had told him the truth.

“Ay,” said he, looking sideways on the burning fire, “Henry is a good lad, a very good lad,” said he. “You have heard, Mr. Mackellar, that I had another son ? I am afraid he was not so virtuous a lad as Mr. Henry ;

but dear me, he's dead, Mr. Mackellar ! and while he lived we were all very proud of him, all very proud. If he was not all he should have been in some ways, well, perhaps we loved him better !” This last he said looking musingly in the fire ; and then to me, with a great deal of briskness, “But I am rejoiced you do so well with Mr. Henry. You will find him a good master.” And with that he opened his book, which was the customary signal of dismissal. But it would be little that he read and less that he understood ; Culloden field and the Master, these would be the burthen of his thought ; and the burthen of mine was an unnatural jealousy of the dead man for Mr. Henry's sake, that had even then begun to grow on me.

I am keeping Mrs. Henry for the last so that this expression of my sentiment may seem unwarrantably strong : the reader shall judge for himself when I have done. But I must first tell of another matter, which was the means of bringing me more intimate. I had not yet been six months at Durrisdeer when it chanced that John Paul fell sick and must keep his bed ; drink was the root of his malady, in my poor thought ; but he was tended and indeed carried himself like an afflicted saint ; and the minister, who came to visit him, professed himself edified when he went away. The third morning of his sickness, Mr. Henry comes to me with something of a hang-dog look.

“Mackellar,” says he, “I wish I could trouble you

upon a little service. There is a pension we pay ; it is John's part to carry it ; and now that he is sick, I know not to whom I should look unless it was yourself. The matter is very delicate ; I could not carry it with my own hand for a sufficient reason ; I dare not send Macconochie who is a talker, and I am—I have—I am desirous this should not come to Mrs. Henry's ears," says he, and flushed to his neck as he said it.

To say truth, when I found I was to carry money to one Jessie Broun who was no better than she should be, I supposed it was some trip of his own that Mr. Henry was dissembling. I was the more impressed when the truth came out.

It was up a wynd off a side street in St. Bride's, that Jessie had her lodging. The place was very ill inhabited, mostly by the freetrading sort ; there was a man with a broken head at the entry ; half way up, in a tavern, fellows were roaring and singing, though it was not yet nine in the day. Altogether, I had never seen a worse neighbourhood even in the great city of Edinburgh, and I was in two minds to go back. Jessie's room was of a piece with her surroundings and herself no better. She would not give me the receipt (which Mr. Henry had told me to demand, for he was very methodical) until she had sent out for spirits and I had pledged her in a glass ; and all the time she carried on in a light-headed, reckless way, now aping the manners of a lady, now breaking into unseemly mirth, now making coquet-

tish advances that oppressed me to the ground. Of the money, she spoke more tragically.

“It’s blood money,” said she, “I take it for that : blood money for the betrayed. See what I’m brought down to ! Ah, if the bonnie lad were back again, it would be changed days. But he’s deid—he’s lyin’ deid amang the Hieland hills—the bonnie lad, the bonnie lad !”

She had a rapt manner of crying on the bonnie lad, clasping her hands and casting up her eyes, that I think she must have learned of strolling players ; and I thought her sorrow very much of an affectation, and that she dwelled upon the business because her shame was now all she had to be proud of. I will not say I did not pity her, but it was a loathing pity at the best ; and her last change of manner wiped it out. This was when she had had enough of me for an audience and had set her name at last to the receipt. “There !” says she, and taking the most unwomanly oaths upon her tongue, bade me begone and carry it to the Judas who had sent me. It was the first time I had heard the name applied to Mr. Henry ; I was staggered besides at her sudden vehemence of word and manner ; and got forth from the room, under this shower of curses, like a beaten dog. But even then I was not quit ; for the vixen threw up her window and, leaning forth, continued to revile me as I went up the wynd ; the free-traders, coming to the tavern door, joined in the mock-

ery ; and one had even the inhumanity to set upon me a very savage, small dog, which bit me in the ankle. This was a strong lesson, had I required one, to avoid ill company ; and I rode home in much pain from the bite and considerable indignation of mind.

Mr. Henry was in the steward's room, affecting employment, but I could see he was only impatient to hear of my errand.

“ Well ? ” says he, as soon as I came in ; and when I had told him something of what passed, and that Jessie seemed an undeserving woman and far from grateful : “ She is no friend to me,” said he ; “ but indeed, Mac-kellar, I have few friends to boast of ; and Jessie has some cause to be unjust. I need not dissemble what all the country knows : she was not very well used by one of our family.” This was the first time I had heard him refer to the Master even distantly ; and I think he found his tongue rebellious, even for that much ; but presently he resumed. “ This is why I would have nothing said. It would give pain to Mrs. Henry . . . and to my father,” he added with another flush.

“ Mr. Henry,” said I, “ if you will take a freedom at my hands, I would tell you to let that woman be. What service is your money to the like of her ? She has no sobriety and no economy ; as for gratitude, you will as soon get milk from a whinstone ; and if you will pretermit your bounty, it will make no change at all but just to save the ankles of your messengers.”

Mr. Henry smiled. "But I am grieved about your ankle," said he, the next moment, with a proper gravity.

"And observe," I continued, "I give you this advice upon consideration ; and yet my heart was touched for the woman in the beginning."

"Why there it is, you see !" said Mr. Henry. "And you are to remember that I knew her once a very decent lass. Besides which, although I speak little of my family, I think much of its repute."

And with that he broke up the talk, which was the first we had together in such confidence. But the same afternoon, I had the proof that his father was perfectly acquainted with the business, and that it was only from his wife that Mr. Henry kept it secret.

"I fear you had a painful errand to-day," says my lord to me : "for which, as it enters in no way among your duties, I wish to thank you, and to remind you at the same time (in case Mr. Henry should have neglected) how very desirable it is that no word of it should reach my daughter. Reflections on the dead, Mr. Mackellar, are doubly painful."

Anger glowed in my heart ; and I would have told my lord to his face how little he had to do, bolstering up the image of the dead in Mrs. Henry's heart, and how much better he were employed, to shatter that false idol. For by this time, I saw very well how the land lay between my patron and his wife.

My pen is clear enough to tell a plain tale ; but to render the effect of an infinity of small things, not one great enough in itself to be narrated ; and to translate the story of looks, and the message of voices when they are saying no great matter ; and to put in half a page the essence of near eighteen months : this is what I despair to accomplish. The fault, to be very blunt, lay all in Mrs. Henry. She felt it a merit to have consented to the marriage, and she took it like a martyrdom ; in which my old lord, whether he knew it or not, fomented her. She made a merit, besides, of her constancy to the dead ; though its name, to a nicer conscience, should have seemed rather disloyalty to the living ; and here also my lord gave her his countenance. I suppose he was glad to talk of his loss, and ashamed to dwell on it with Mr. Henry. Certainly, at least, he made a little coterie apart in that family of three, and it was the husband who was shut out. It seems it was an old custom when the family were alone in Durrishdeer, that my lord should take his wine to the chimney-side, and Miss Alison (instead of withdrawing) should bring a stool to his knee and chatter to him privately ; and after she had become my patron's wife, the same manner of doing was continued. It should have been pleasant to behold this ancient gentleman so loving with his daughter ; but I was too much a partisan of Mr. Henry's, to be anything but wroth at his exclusion. Many's the time I have seen him make an obvious re-

solve, quit the table, and go and join himself to his wife and my Lord Durrisdeer ; and on their part, they were never backward to make him welcome, turned to him smilingly as to an intruding child, and took him into their talk with an effort so ill-concealed that he was soon back again beside me at the table ; whence, so great is the hall of Durrisdeer, we could but hear the murmur of voices at the chimney. There he would sit and watch, and I along with him ; and sometimes by my lord's head sorrowfully shaken, or his hand laid on Mrs. Henry's head, or hers upon his knee as if in consolation, or sometimes by an exchange of tearful looks, we would draw our conclusion that the talk had gone to the old subject and the shadow of the dead was in the hall.

I have hours when I blame Mr. Henry for taking all too patiently ; yet we are to remember he was married in pity, and accepted his wife upon that term. And indeed he had small encouragement to make a stand. Once, I remember, he announced he had found a man to replace the pane of the stained window ; which, as it was he that managed all the business, was a thing clearly within his attributions. But to the Master's fanciers, that pane was like a relic ; and on the first word of any change, the blood flew to Mrs. Henry's face.

“ I wonder at you ! ” she cried.

“ I wonder at myself,” says Mr. Henry, with more of bitterness than I had ever heard him to express.

Thereupon my old lord stepped in with his smooth talk, so that before the meal was at an end all seemed forgotten ; only that, after dinner, when the pair had withdrawn as usual to the chimneyside, we could see her weeping with her head upon his knee. Mr. Henry kept up the talk with me upon some topic of the estates—he could speak of little else but business, and was never the best of company ; but he kept it up that day with more continuity, his eye straying ever and again to the chimney and his voice changing to another key, but without check of delivery. The pane, however, was not replaced ; and I believe he counted it a great defeat.

Whether he was stout enough or no, God knows he was kind enough. Mrs. Henry had a manner of condescension with him, such as (in a wife) would have pricked my vanity into an ulcer ; he took it like a favour. She held him at the staff's end ; forgot and then remembered and unbent to him, as we do to children ; burthened him with cold kindness ; reproved him with a change of colour and a bitten lip, like one shamed by his disgrace : ordered him with a look of the eye, when she was off her guard ; when she was on the watch, pleaded with him for the most natural attentions as though they were unheard of favours. And to all this, he replied with the most unwearied service ; loving, as folk say, the very ground she trod on, and carrying that love in his eyes as bright as a lamp. When Miss Katharine was to be born, nothing would serve but he must

stay in the room behind the head of the bed. There he sat, as white (they tell me) as a sheet and the sweat dropping from his brow ; and the handkerchief he had in his hand was crushed into a little ball no bigger than a musket bullet. Nor could he bear the sight of Miss Katharine for many a day ; indeed I doubt if he was ever what he should have been to my young lady ; for the which want of natural feeling, he was loudly blamed.

Such was the state of this family down to the 7th April, 1749, when there befell the first of that series of events which were to break so many hearts and lose so many lives.

II.

ON that day, I was sitting in my room a little before supper, when John Paul burst open the door with no civility of knocking, and told me there was one below that wished to speak with the steward ; sneering at the name of my office.

I asked what manner of man, and what his name was ; and this disclosed the cause of John's ill humour ; for it appeared the visitor refused to name himself except to me, a sore affront to the major-domo's consequence.

“ Well,” said I, smiling a little, “ I will see what he wants.”

I found in the entrance hall a big man very plainly habited and wrapped in a sea cloak, like one new landed, as indeed he was. Not far off Macconochie was standing, with his tongue out of his mouth and his hand upon his chin, like a dull fellow thinking hard ; and the stranger, who had brought his cloak about his face, appeared uneasy. He had no sooner seen me coming than he went to meet me with an effusive manner.

“ My dear man,” said he, “ a thousand apologies for disturbing you, but I'm in the most awkward position. And there's a son of a ramrod there that I should know the looks of, and more by token I believe that he knows

mine. Being in this family, sir, and in a place of some responsibility (which was the cause I took the liberty to send for you) you are doubtless of the honest party?"

"You may be sure at least," says I, "that all of that party are quite safe in Durrisdeer."

"My dear man, it is my very thought," says he. "You see I have just been set on shore here by a very honest man, whose name I cannot remember, and who is to stand off and on for me till morning, at some danger to himself; and to be clear with you, I am a little concerned lest it should be at some to me. I have saved my life so often, Mr. — I forget your name, which is a very good one—that faith, I would be very loath to lose it after all. And the son of a ramrod, whom I believe I saw before Carlisle . . ."

"O, sir," said I, "you can trust Macconochie until to-morrow."

"Well, and it's a delight to hear you say so," says the stranger. "The truth is that my name is not a very suitable one in this country of Scotland. With a gentleman like you, my dear man, I would have no concealments of course; and by your leave, I'll just breathe it in your ear. They call me Francis Burke: Colonel Francis Burke; and I am here, at a most damnable risk to myself, to see your masters—if you'll excuse me, my good man, for giving them the name, for I'm sure it's a circumstance I would never have guessed from your appearance. And if you would just be so very obliging as

to take my name to them, you might say that I come bearing letters which I am sure they will be very rejoiced to have the reading of."

Colonel Francis Burke was one of the Prince's Irishmen, that did his cause such an infinity of hurt and were so much distasted of the Scots at the time of the rebellion; and it came at once into the mind, how the Master of Ballantrae had astonished all men by going with that party. In the same moment, a strong foreboding of the truth possessed my soul.

"If you will step in here," said I, opening a chamber door, "I will let my lord know."

"And I am sure it's very good of you, Mr. What is your name," says the Colonel.

Up to the hall I went, slow footed. There they were all three, my old lord in his place, Mrs. Henry at work by the window, Mr. Henry (as was much his custom) pacing the low end. In the midst was the table laid for supper. I told them briefly what I had to say. My old lord lay back in his seat. Mrs. Henry sprang up standing with a mechanical motion, and she and her husband stared in each other's eyes across the room; it was the strangest, challenging look these two exchanged, and as they looked, the colour faded in their faces. Then Mr. Henry turned to me; not to speak, only to sign with his finger; but that was enough, and I went down again for the Colonel.

When we returned, these three were in much the

same position I had left them in ; I believe no word had passed.

“My lord Durrisdeer no doubt ?” says the Colonel, bowing, and my lord bowed in answer. “And this,” continues the Colonel, “should be the Master of Ballantrae ? ”

“I have never taken that name,” said Mr. Henry ; “but I am Henry Durie at your service.”

Then the Colonel turns to Mrs. Henry, bowing with his hat upon his heart and the most killing airs of gallantry. “There can be no mistake about so fine a figure of a lady,” says he. “I address the seductive Miss Alison, of whom I have so often heard ? ”

Once more husband and wife exchanged a look.

“I am Mrs. Henry Durie,” said she ; “but before my marriage my name was Alison Graeme.”

Then my lord spoke up. “I am an old man, Colonel Burke,” said he, “and a frail one. It will be mercy on your part to be expeditious. Do you bring me news of—of—” he hesitated, and then the words broke from him with a singular change of voice—“my son ? ”

“My dear lord, I will be round with you like a soldier,” said the Colonel. “I do.”

My lord held out a wavering hand ; he seemed to wave a signal, but whether it was to give him time or to speak on, was more than we could guess. At length, he got out the one word—“good ? ”

“Why, the very best in the creation !” cries the Col-

onel. "For my good friend and admired comrade is at this hour in the fine city of Paris, and as like as not, if I know anything of his habits, he will be drawing in his chair to a piece of dinner.—Bedad, I believe the lady's fainting."

Mrs. Henry was indeed the colour of death, and drooped against the window frame. But when Mr. Henry made a movement as if to run to her, she straightened with a sort of shiver. "I am well," she said, with her white lips.

Mr. Henry stopped, and his face had a strong twitch of anger. The next moment, he had turned to the Colonel. "You must not blame yourself," says he, "for this effect on Mrs. Durie. It is only natural ; we were all brought up like brother and sister."

Mrs. Henry looked at her husband with something like relief or even gratitude. In my way of thinking, that speech was the first step he made in her good graces.

"You must try to forgive me, Mrs. Durie, for indeed and I am just an Irish savage," said the Colonel ; "and I deserve to be shot for not breaking the matter more artistically to a lady. But here are the Master's own letters ; one for each of the three of you ; and to be sure (if I know anything of my friend's genius) he will tell his own story with a better grace."

He brought the three letters forth as he spoke, arranged them by their superscriptions, presented the first

to my lord who took it greedily, and advanced towards Mrs. Henry holding out the second.

But the lady waved it back. "To my husband," says she, with a choked voice.

The Colonel was a quick man, but at this he was somewhat non-plussed. "To be sure," says he, "how very dull of me! To be sure." But he still held the letter.

At last Mr. Henry reached forth his hand, and there was nothing to be done but give it up. Mr. Henry took the letters (both hers and his own) and looked upon their outside, with his brows knit hard as if he were thinking. He had surprised me all through by his excellent behaviour; but he was to excel himself.

"Let me give you a hand to your room," said he to his wife. "This has come something of the suddenest; and at any rate, you will wish to read your letter by yourself."

Again she looked upon him with the same thought of wonder; but he gave her no time, coming straight to where she stood. "It will be better so, believe me," said he, "and Colonel Burke is too considerate not to excuse you." And with that he took her hand by the fingers, and led her from the hall.

Mrs. Henry returned no more that night; and when Mr. Henry went to visit her next morning, as I heard long afterwards, she gave him the letter again, still unopened.

"O, read it and be done!" he had cried.

"Spare me that," said she.

And by these two speeches, to my way of thinking, each undid a great part of what they had previously done well. But the letter, sure enough, came into my hands and by me was burned, unopened.

To be very exact as to the adventures of the Master after Culloden, I wrote not long ago to Colonel Burke, now a Chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, begging him for some notes in writing, since I could scarce depend upon my memory at so great an interval. To confess the truth, I have been somewhat embarrassed by his response ; for he sent me the complete memoirs of his life, touching only in places on the Master ; running to a much greater length than my whole story, and not everywhere (as it seems to me) designed for edification. He begged in his letter, dated from Ettenheim, that I would find a publisher for the whole, after I had made what use of it I required ; and I think I shall best answer my own purpose and fulfil his wishes by printing certain parts of it in full. In this way, my readers will have a detailed and I believe a very genuine account of some essential matters ; and if any publisher should take a fancy to the Chevalier's manner of narration, he knows where to apply for the rest, of which there is plenty at his service. I put in my first extract here, so that it may stand in the place of what the Chevalier told us over our wine in the hall of Durrisddeer ; but you are to suppose it was not the brutal fact, but a very varnished version that he offered to my lord.

ACCOUNT OF THE MASTER'S WANDERINGS.

From the Manuscript of the Chevalier de Burke.

. . . . I LEFT Ruthven (it's hardly necessary to remark) with much greater satisfaction than I had come to it ; but whether I missed my way in the deserts, or whether my companions failed me, I soon found myself alone. This was a predicament very disagreeable ; for I never understood this horrid country or savage people, and the last stroke of the Prince's withdrawal had made us of the Irish more unpopular than ever. I was reflecting on my poor chances, when I saw another horseman on the hill, whom I supposed at first to have been a phantom, the news of his death in the very front at Culloden being current in the army generally. This was the Master of Ballantrae, my Lord Durrisdeer's son, a young nobleman of the rarest gallantry and parts, and equally designed by nature to adorn a court and to reap laurels in the field. Our meeting was the more welcome to both, as he was one of the few Scots who had used the Irish with consideration and as he might now be of very high utility in aiding my escape. Yet what founded our particular friendship was a circumstance by itself, as romantic as any fable of King Arthur.

This was on the second day of our flight, after we had slept one night in the rain upon the inclination of a mountain. There was an Appin man, Alan Black Stew-

art (or some such name,* but I have seen him since in France) who chanced to be passing the same way, and had a jealousy of my companion. Very uncivil expressions were exchanged ; and Stewart calls upon the Master to alight and have it out.

“ Why, Mr. Stewart,” says the Master, “ I think at the present time, I would prefer to run a race with you.” And with the word claps spurs to his horse.

Stewart ran after us, a childish thing to do, for more than a mile ; and I could not help laughing, as I looked back at last and saw him on a hill, holding his hand to his side and nearly burst with running.

“ But all the same,” I could not help saying to my companion, “ I would let no man run after me for any such proper purpose, and not give him his desire. It was a good jest, but it smells a trifle cowardly.”

He bent his brows at me. “ I do pretty well,” says he, “ when I saddle myself with the most unpopular man in Scotland, and let that suffice for courage.”

“ O, bedad,” says I, “ I could show you a more unpopular with the naked eye. And if you like not my company, you can ‘ saddle ’ yourself on some one else.”

“ Colonel Burke,” says he, “ do not let us quarrel ; and to that effect, let me assure you I am the least patient man in the world.”

* *Note by Mr. Mackellar :* Should not this be Alan Breck Stewart, afterwards notorious as the Appin murderer ? The Chevalier is sometimes very weak on names.

“I am as little patient as yourself,” said I. “I care not who knows that.”

“At this rate,” says he, reining in, “we shall not go very far. And I propose we do one of two things upon the instant : either quarrel and be done ; or make a sure bargain to bear everything at each other’s hands.”

“Like a pair of brothers ?” said I.

“I said no such foolishness,” he replied. “I have a brother of my own, and I think no more of him than of a colewart. But if we are to have our noses rubbed together in this course of flight, let us each dare to be ourselves like savages, and each swear that he will neither resent nor deprecate the other. I am a pretty bad fellow at bottom, and I find the pretence of virtues very irksome.”

“O, I am as bad as yourself,” said I. “There is no skim milk in Francis Burke. But which is it to be ? Fight or make friends ?”

“Why,” says he, “I think it will be the best manner to spin a coin for it.”

This proposition was too highly chivalrous not to take my fancy ; and strange as it may seem of two well-born gentlemen of to-day, we span a half-crown (like a pair of ancient paladins) whether we were to cut each other’s throats or be sworn friends. A more romantic circumstance can rarely have occurred ; and it is one of those points in my memoirs, by which we may see the old tales of Homer and the poets are equally true to-day,

at least of the noble and genteel. The coin fell for peace, and we shook hands upon our bargain. And then it was that my companion explained to me his thought in running away from Mr. Stewart, which was certainly worthy of his political intellect. The report of his death, he said, was a great guard to him ; Mr. Stewart having recognized him, had become a danger ; and he had taken the briefest road to that gentleman's silence. "For," says he, "Alan Black is too vain a man to narrate any such story of himself."

Towards afternoon, we came down to the shores of that loch for which we were heading ; and there was the ship but newly come to anchor. She was the *Sainte-Marie-des-Anges*, out of the port of Havre-de-Grace. The Master, after we had signalled for a boat, asked me if I knew the captain. I told him he was a countryman of mine, of the most unblemished integrity, but, I was afraid, a rather timorous man.

"No matter," says he. "For all that, he should certainly hear the truth."

I asked him if he meant about the battle ? for if the captain once knew the standard was down, he would certainly put to sea again at once.

"And even then !" said he ; "the arms are now of no sort of utility."

"My dear man," said I, "who thinks of the arms ? But to be sure we must remember our friends. They will be close upon our heels, perhaps the Prince himself,

and if the ship be gone, a great number of valuable lives may be imperilled."

"The captain and the crew have lives also, if you come to that," says Ballantrae.

This I declared was but a quibble, and that I would not hear of the captain being told : and then it was that Ballantrae made me a witty answer, for the sake of which (and also because I have been blamed myself in this business of the *Sainte-Marie-des-Anges*) I have related the whole conversation as it passed.

"Frank," says he, "remember our bargain. I must not object to your holding your tongue, which I hereby even encourage you to do ; but by the same terms, you are not to resent my telling."

I could not help laughing at this ; though I still forewarned him what would come of it.

"The devil may come of it for what I care," says the reckless fellow. "I have always done exactly as I felt inclined."

As is well known, my prediction came true. The captain had no sooner heard the news, than he cut his cable and to sea again ; and before morning broke, we were in the Great Minch.

The ship was very old ; and the skipper although the most honest of men (and Irish too) was one of the least capable. The wind blew very boisterous, and the sea raged extremely. All that day, we had little heart whether to eat or drink ; went early to rest in some con-

cern of mind ; and (as if to give us a lesson) in the night, the wind chopped suddenly into the northeast, and blew a hurricane. We were awaked by the dreadful thunder of the tempest and the stamping of the mariners on deck ; so that I supposed our last hour was certainly come ; and the terror of my mind was increased out of all measure by Ballantrae, who mocked at my devotions. It is in hours like these that a man of any piety appears in his true light, and we find (what we are taught as babes) the small trust that can be set in worldly friends : I would be unworthy of my religion, if I let this pass without particular remark. For three days we lay in the dark in the cabin, and had but a biscuit to nibble. On the fourth, the wind fell, leaving the ship dismasted and heaving on vast billows. The captain had not a guess of whither we were blown ; he was stark ignorant of his trade, and could do naught but bless the Holy Virgin : a very good thing too, but scarce the whole of seamanship. It seemed our one hope was to be picked up by another vessel ; and if that should prove to be an English ship, it might be no great blessing to the Master and myself.

The fifth and sixth days we tossed there helpless. The seventh, some sail was got on her, but she was an unwieldy vessel at the best, and we made little but leeway. All the time, indeed, we had been drifting to the south and west, and during the tempest must have driven in that direction with unheard-of violence. The ninth

dawn was cold and black, with a great sea running, and every mark of foul weather. In this situation, we were overjoyed to sight a small ship on the horizon, and to perceive her go about and head for the *Sainte-Marie*. But our gratification did not very long endure ; for when she had laid to and lowered a boat, it was immediately filled with disorderly fellows, who sang and shouted as they pulled across to us, and swarmed in on our deck with bare cutlasses, cursing loudly. Their leader was a horrible villain, with his face blacked and his whiskers curled in ringlets : Teach, his name ; a most notorious pirate. He stamped about the deck, raving and crying out that his name was Satan and his ship was called Hell. There was something about him like a wicked child or a half-witted person, that daunted me beyond expression. I whispered in the ear of Ballantrae, that I would not be the last to volunteer and only prayed God they might be short of hands : he approved my purpose with a nod.

“ Bedad,” said I, to Master Teach, “ if you are Satan, here is a divil for ye.”

The word pleased him ; and (not to dwell upon these shocking incidents) Ballantrae and I and two others were taken for recruits, while the skipper and all the rest were cast into the sea by the method of walking the plank. It was the first time I had seen this done ; my heart died within me at the spectacle ; and Master Teach or one of his acolytes (for my head was too much lost to

be precise) remarked upon my pale face in a very alarming manner. I had the strength to cut a step or two of a jig and cry out some ribaldry, which saved me for that time ; but my legs were like water when I must get down into the skiff among these miscreants ; and what with my horror of my company and fear of the monstrous billows, it was all I could do to keep an Irish tongue and break a jest or two as we were pulled aboard. By the blessing of God, there was a fiddle in the pirate ship, which I had no sooner seen than I fell upon ; and in my quality of crowder, I had the heavenly good luck to get favour in their eyes. *Crowding Pat*, was the name they dubbed me with ; and it was little I cared for a name so long as my skin was whole.

What kind of a pandemonium that vessel was, I cannot describe, but she was commanded by a lunatic, and might be called a floating Bedlam. Drinking, roaring, singing, quarreling, dancing, they were never all sober at one time ; and there were days together, when if a squall had supervened, it must have sent us to the bottom, or if a king's ship had come along, it would have found us quite helpless for defence. Once or twice, we sighted a sail, and if we were sober enough, overhauled it, God forgive us ! and if we were all too drunk, she got away, and I would bless the saints under my breath. Teach ruled, if you can call that rule which brought no order, by the terror he created ; and I observed the man was very vain of his position. I have known marshals of

France, ay, and even Highland chiefs that were less openly puffed up ; which throws a singular light on the pursuit of honour and glory. Indeed the longer we live, the more we perceive the sagacity of Aristotle and the other old philosophers ; and though I have all my life been eager for legitimate distinctions, I can lay my hand upon my heart, at the end of my career, and declare there is not one—no, nor yet life itself—which is worth acquiring or preserving at the slightest cost of dignity.

It was long before I got private speech of Ballantrae ; but at length one night we crept out upon the boltsprit, when the rest were better employed, and commiserated our position.

“None can deliver us but the saints,” said I.

“My mind is very different,” said Ballantrae ; “for I am going to deliver myself. This Teach is the poorest creature possible ; we make no profit of him and lie continually open to capture ; and,” says he, “I am not going to be a tarry pirate for nothing, nor yet to hang in chains if I can help it.” And he told me what was in his mind to better the state of the ship in the way of discipline, which would give us safety for the present, and a sooner hope of deliverance when they should have gained enough and should break up their company.

I confessed to him ingenuously that my nerve was quite shook amid these horrible surroundings, and I durst scarce tell him to count upon me.

“I am not very easy frightened,” said he, “nor very easy beat.”

A few days after, there befell an accident which had nearly hanged us all ; and offers the most extraordinary picture of the folly that ruled in our concerns. We were all pretty drunk : and some bedlamite spying a sail, Teach put the ship about in chase without a glance, and we began to bustle up the arms and boast of the horrors that should follow. I observed Ballantrae stood quiet in the bows, looking under the shade of his hand ; but for my part, true to my policy among these savages, I was at work with the busiest and passing Irish jests for their diversion.

“Run up the colors,” cries Teach. “Show the ——s the Jolly Roger!”

It was the merest drunken braggadocio at such a stage, and might have lost us a valuable prize ; but I thought it no part of mine to reason, and I ran up the black flag with my own hand.

Ballantrae steps presently aft with a smile upon his face.

“You may perhaps like to know, you drunken dog,” says he, “that you are chasing a king’s ship.”

Teach roared him the lie ; but he ran at the same time to the bulwarks, and so did they all. I have never seen so many drunken men struck suddenly sober. The cruiser had gone about, upon our impudent display of colours ; she was just then filling on the new tack ; her

ensign blew out quite plain to see ; and even as we stared, there came a puff of smoke, and then a report, and a shot plunged in the waves a good way short of us. Some ran to the ropes, and got the *Sarah* round with an incredible swiftness. One fellow made for the rum barrel, which stood broached upon the deck, and rolled it promptly overboard. On my part, I made for the Jolly Roger, struck it, tossed it in the sea ; and could have flung myself after, so vexed was I with our mismanagement. As for Teach, he grew as pale as death, and incontinently went down to his cabin. Only twice he came on deck that afternoon ; went to the taffrail ; took a long look at the king's ship, which was still on the horizon heading after us ; and then, without speech, back to his cabin. You may say he deserted us ; and if it had not been for one very capable sailor we had on board, and for the lightness of the airs that blew all day, we must certainly have gone to the yard-arm.

It is to be supposed Teach was humiliated, and perhaps alarmed for his position with the crew ; and the way in which he set about regaining what he had lost, was highly characteristic of the man. Early next day, we smelled him burning sulphur in his cabin and crying out of " Hell, hell ! " which was well understood among the crew, and filled their minds with apprehension. Presently he comes on deck, a perfect figure of fun, his face blacked, his hair and whiskers curled, his belt stuck full of pistols ; chewing bits of glass so that the blood ran

down his chin, and brandishing a dirk. I do not know if he had taken these manners from the Indians of America, where he was a native ; but such was his way, and he would always thus announce that he was wound up to horrid deeds. The first that came near him was the fellow who had sent the rum overboard the day before ; him he stabbed to the heart, damning him for a mutineer ; and then capered about the body, raving and swearing and daring us to come on. It was the silliest exhibition ; and yet dangerous too, for the cowardly fellow was plainly working himself up to another murder.

All of a sudden, Ballantrae stepped forth. "Have done with this play-acting," says he. "Do you think to frighten us with making faces ? We saw nothing of you yesterday when you were wanted ; and we did well without you, let me tell you that."

There was a murmur and a movement in the crew, of pleasure and alarm, I thought, in nearly equal parts. As for Teach, he gave a barbarous howl, and swung his dirk to fling it, an art in which (like many seamen) he was very expert.

"Knock that out of his hand !" says Ballantrae, so sudden and sharp that my arm obeyed him before my mind had understood.

Teach stood like one stupid, never thinking on his pistols.

"Go down to your cabin," cries Ballantrae, "and

come on deck again when you are sober. Do you think we are going to hang for you, you black-faced, half-witted, drunken brute and butcher? Go down!" And he stamped his foot at him with such a sudden smartness that Teach fairly ran for it to the companion.

"And now, mates," says Ballantrae, "a word with you. I don't know if you are gentlemen of fortune for the fun of the thing; but I am not. I want to make money, and get ashore again, and spend it like a man. And on one thing my mind is made up: I will not hang if I can help it. Come: give me a hint; I'm only a beginner! Is there no way to get a little discipline and common sense about this business?"

One of the men spoke up: he said by rights they should have a quartermaster; and no sooner was the word out of his mouth, than they were all of that opinion. The thing went by acclamation, Ballantrae was made quartermaster, the rum was put in his charge, laws were passed in imitation of those of a pirate by the name of Roberts; and, the last proposal was to make an end of Teach. But Ballantrae was afraid of a more efficient captain, who might be a counterweight to himself, and he opposed this stoutly. Teach, he said, was good enough to board ships and frighten fools with his blacked face and swearing; we could scarce get a better man than Teach for that; and besides as the man was now dis-considered and as good as deposed, we might reduce his proportion of the plunder. This carried it;

Teach's share was cut down to a mere derision, being actually less than mine; and there remained only two points: whether he would consent, and who was to announce to him this resolution.

"Do not let that stick you," says Ballantrae, "I will do that."

And he stepped to the companion and down alone into the cabin to face that drunken savage.

"This is the man for us," cries one of the hands. "Three cheers for the quartermaster!" which were given with a will, my own voice among the loudest, and I dare say these plaudits had their effect on Master Teach in the cabin, as we have seen of late days how shouting in the streets may trouble even the minds of legislators.

What passed precisely was never known, though some of the heads of it came to the surface later on; and we were all amazed as well as gratified, when Ballantrae came on deck with Teach upon his arm, and announced that all had been consented.

I pass swiftly over those twelve or fifteen months in which we continued to keep the sea in the North Atlantic, getting our food and water from the ships we overhauled and doing on the whole a pretty fortunate business. Sure no one could wish to read anything so ungenteel as the memoirs of a pirate, even an unwilling one like me! Things went extremely better with our designs, and Ballantrae kept his lead to my admiration

from that day forth. I would be tempted to suppose that a gentleman must everywhere be first, even aboard a rover; but my birth is every whit as good as any Scottish lord's, and I am not ashamed to confess that I stayed Crowding Pat until the end, and was not much better than the crew's buffoon. Indeed it was no scene to bring out my merits. My health suffered from a variety of reasons; I was more at home to the last on a horse's back than a ship's deck; and to be ingenuous, the fear of the sea was constantly in my mind, battling with the fear of my companions. I need not cry myself up for courage; I have done well on many fields under the eyes of famous generals, and earned my late advancement by an act of the most distinguished valour before many witnesses. But when we must proceed on one of our abordages, the heart of Francis Burke was in his boots; the little egg-shell skiff in which we must set forth, the horrible heaving of the vast billows, the height of the ship that we must scale, the thought of how many might be there in garrison upon their legitimate defence, the scowling heavens which (in that climate) so often looked darkly down upon our exploits, and the mere crying of the wind in my ears, were all considerations most unpalatable to my valour. Besides which, as I was always a creature of the nicest sensibility, the scenes that must follow on our success tempted me as little as the chances of defeat. Twice we found women on board; and though I have

seen towns sacked, and of late days here in France some very horrid public tumults, there was something in the smallness of the numbers engaged and the bleak, dangerous sea-surroundings that made these acts of piracy far the most revolting. I confess ingenuously I could never proceed, unless I was three parts drunk ; it was the same even with the crew ; Teach himself was fit for no enterprise till he was full of rum ; and it was one of the most difficult parts of Ballantrae's performance, to serve us with liquor in the proper quantities. Even this he did to admiration ; being upon the whole the most capable man I ever met with, and the one of the most natural genius. He did not even scrape favour with the crew, as I did, by continual buffoonery made upon a very anxious heart ; but preserved on most occasions a great deal of gravity and distance ; so that he was like a parent among a family of young children or a schoolmaster with his boys. His likeness to the first was even laughable, when he would sometimes condescend to divert our leisures with his sleight of hand, an art to which he was singularly given. What made his part the harder to perform, the men were most inveterate grumblers ; Ballantrae's discipline, little as it was, was yet irksome to their love of license ; and what was worse, being kept sober, they had time to think. Some of them accordingly would fall to repenting their abominable crimes ; one in particular, who was a good Catholic and with whom I would sometimes

steal apart for prayer ; above all in bad weather, fogs, lashing rain and the like, when we would be the less observed ; and I am sure no two criminals in the cart have ever performed their devotions with more anxious sincerity. But the rest having no such grounds of hope, fell to another pastime, that of computation. All day long they would be telling up their shares or glooming over the result. I have said we were pretty fortunate. But an observation fails to be made : that in this world, in no business that I have tried, do the profits rise to a man's expectations. We found many ships and took many ; yet few of them contained much money, their goods were usually nothing to our purpose—what did we want with a cargo of ploughs or even of tobacco?—and it is quite a painful reflection how many whole crews we have made to walk the plank for no more than a stock of biscuit or an anker or two of spirit.

In the meanwhile, our ship was growing very foul, and it was high time we should make for our *port de carrénage*, which was in the estuary of a river among swamps. It was openly understood, that we should then break up and go and squander our proportions of the spoil ; and this made every man greedy of a little more, so that our decision was delayed from day to day. What finally decided matters, was a trifling accident, such as an ignorant person might suppose incidental to our way of life. But here I must explain : on only one

of all the ships we boarded, the first on which we found women, did we meet with any genuine resistance. On that occasion, we had two men killed, and several injured, and if it had not been for the gallantry of Ballantrae, we had surely been beat back at last. Everywhere else, the defence (where there was any at all) was what the worst troops in Europe would have laughed at; so that the most dangerous part of our employment was to clamber up the side of the ship; and I have even known the poor souls on board to cast us a line, so eager were they to volunteer instead of walking the plank. This constant immunity had made our fellows very soft, so that I understood how Teach had made so deep a mark upon their minds; for indeed the company of that lunatic was the chief danger in our way of life. The accident to which I have referred was this. We had sighted a little full-rigged ship very close under our board in a haze; she sailed near as well as we did—I should be nearer truth, if I said near as ill; and we cleared the bow-chaser to see if we could bring a spar or two about their ears. The swell was exceeding great; the motion of the ship beyond description; it was little wonder if our gunners should fire thrice and be still quite broad of what they aimed at. But in the meanwhile, the chase had cleared a stern gun, the thickness of the air concealing them; and being better marksmen, their first shot struck us in the bows, knocked our two gunners into mince meat, so that we were all sprinkled

with the blood, and plunged through the deck into the fore castle, where we slept. Ballantrae would have held on ; indeed there was nothing in this *contretemps* to affect the mind of any soldier ; but he had a quick perception of the men's wishes, and it was plain this lucky shot had given them a sickener of their trade. In a moment, they were all of one mind : the chase was drawing away from us, it was needless to hold on, the *Sarah* was too foul to overhaul a bottle, it was mere foolery to keep the sea with her ; and on these pretended grounds, her head was incontinently put about and the course laid for the river. It was strange to see what merriment fell on that ship's company, and how they stamped about the deck jesting, and each computing what increase had come to his share by the death of the two gunners.

III.

WE were nine days making our port, so light were the airs we had to sail on, so foul the ship's bottom ; but early on the tenth, before dawn, and in a light, lifting haze, we passed the head. A little after, the haze lifted, and fell again, showing us a cruiser very close. This was a sore blow, happening so near our refuge. There was a great debate of whether she had seen us, and if so whether it was likely they had recognized the *Sarah*. We were very careful, by destroying every member of those crews we overhauled, to leave no evidence as to our own persons ; but the appearance of the *Sarah* herself we could not keep so private ; and above all of late, since she had been foul and we had pursued many ships without success, it was plain that her description had been often published. I supposed this alert would have made us separate upon the instant. But here again that original genius of Ballantrae's had a surprise in store for me. He and Teach (and it was the most remarkable step of his success) had gone hand in hand since the first day of his appointment. I often questioned him upon the fact and never got an answer but once, when he told me he and Teach had an understanding " which would very much surprise the crew if they

should hear of it, and would surprise himself a good deal if it was carried out." Well, here again, he and Teach were of a mind ; and by their joint procurement, the anchor was no sooner down, than the whole crew went off upon a scene of drunkenness indescribable. By afternoon, we were a mere shipful of lunatical persons, throwing of things overboard, howling of different songs at the same time, quarrelling and falling together and then forgetting their quarrel to embrace. Ballantrae had bidden me drink nothing and feign drunkenness as I valued my life ; and I have never passed a day so wearisomely, lying the best part of the time upon the forecastle and watching the swamps and thickets by which our little basin was entirely surrounded for the eye. A little after dusk, Ballantrae stumbled up to my side, feigned to fall, with a drunken laugh, and before he got his feet again, whispered me to "reel down into the cabin and seem to fall asleep upon a locker, for there would be need of me soon." I did as I was told, and coming into the cabin, where it was quite dark, let myself fall on the first locker. There was a man there already ; by the way he stirred and threw me off, I could not think he was much in liquor ; and yet when I had found another place, he seemed to continue to sleep on. My heart now beat very hard, for I saw some desperate matter was in act. Presently down came Ballantrae, lit the lamp, looked about the cabin, nodded as if pleased, and on deck again without a word. I peered out from

between my fingers, and saw there were three of us slumbering, or feigning to slumber, on the lockers : myself, one Dutton and one Grady, both resolute men. On deck, the rest were got to a pitch of revelry quite beyond the bounds of what is human ; so that no reasonable name can describe the sounds they were now making. I have heard many a drunken bout in my time, many on board that very *Sarah*, but never anything the least like this, which made me early suppose the liquor had been tampered with. It was a long while before these yells and howls died out into a sort of miserable moaning, and then to silence ; and it seemed a long while after that, before Ballantrae came down again, this time with Teach upon his heels. The latter cursed at the sight of us three upon the lockers.

“Tut,” says Ballantrae, “you might fire a pistol at their ears. You know what stuff they have been swallowing.”

There was a hatch in the cabin floor, and under that the richest part of the booty was stored against the day of division. It fastened with a ring and three padlocks, the keys (for greater security) being divided ; one to Teach, one to Ballantrae, and one to the mate, a man called Hammond. Yet I was amazed to see they were now all in the one hand ; and yet more amazed (still looking through my fingers) to observe Ballantrae and Teach bring up several packets, four of them in all, very carefully made up and with a loop for carriage.

“And now,” says Teach, “let us be going.”

“One word,” says Ballantrae, “I have discovered there is another man besides yourself who knows a private path across the swamp. And it seems it is shorter than yours.”

Teach cried out, in that case, they were undone.

“I do not know for that,” says Ballantrae. “For there are several other circumstances with which I must acquaint you. First of all, there is no bullet in your pistols which (if you remember) I was kind enough to load for both of us this morning. Secondly, as there is some one else who knows a passage, you must think it highly improbable I should saddle myself with a lunatic like you. Thirdly, these gentlemen (who need no longer pretend to be asleep) are those of my party, and will now proceed to gag and bind you to the mast; and when your men awaken (if they ever do awake after the drugs we have mingled in their liquor) I am sure they will be so obliging as to deliver you, and you will have no difficulty, I daresay, to explain the business of the keys.”

Not a word said Teach, but looked at us like a frightened baby, as we gagged and bound him.

“Now you see, you moon-calf,” says Ballantrae, “why we made four packets. Heretofore you have been called Captain Teach, but I think you are now rather Captain Learn.”

That was our last word on board the *Sarah*, we four with our four packets lowered ourselves softly into a skiff,

and left that ship behind us as silent as the grave, only for the moaning of some of the drunkards. There was a fog about breast-high on the waters ; so that Dutton, who knew the passage, must stand on his feet to direct our rowing ; and this, as it forced us to row gently, was the means of our deliverance. We were yet but a little way from the ship, when it began to come gray, and the birds to fly abroad upon the water. All of a sudden, Dutton clapped down upon his hams, and whispered us to be silent for our lives, and hearken. Sure enough, we heard a little faint creak of oars upon one hand, and then again, and further off, a creak of oars upon the other. It was clear, we had been sighted yesterday in the morning ; here were the cruiser's boats to cut us out ; here were we defenceless in their very midst. Sure, never were poor souls more perilously placed ; and as we lay there on our oars, praying God the mist might hold, the sweat poured from my brow. Presently we heard one of the boats, where we might have thrown a biscuit in her. "Softly, men," we heard an officer whisper ; and I marvelled they could not hear the drumming of my heart.

"Never mind the path," says Ballantrae, "we must get shelter anyhow ; let us pull straight ahead for the sides of the basin."

This we did with the most anxious precaution, rowing, as best we could, upon our hands, and steering at a venture in the fog which was (for all that) our only safety.

But heaven guided us ; we touched ground at a thicket ; scrambled ashore with our treasure ; and having no other way of concealment, and the mist beginning already to lighten, hove down the skiff and let her sink. We were still but new under cover when the sun rose ; and at the same time, from the midst of the basin, a great shouting of seamen sprang up, and we knew the *Sarah* was being boarded. I heard afterwards the officer that took her got great honour ; and it's true the approach was creditably managed, but I think he had an easy capture when he came to board.*

I was still blessing the saints for my escape ; when I became aware we were in trouble of another kind. We were here landed at random in a vast and dangerous swamp ; and how to come at the path was a concern of doubt, fatigue and peril. Dutton, indeed, was of opinion we should wait until the ship was gone, and fish up the skiff ; for any delay would be more wise than to go blindly ahead in that morass. One went back accordingly to the basin-side and (peering through the thicket) saw the fog already quite drunk up and English colours flying on the *Sarah*, but no movement made to get her

* *Note by Mr. Mackellar.* This Teach of the *Sarah* must not be confused with the celebrated *Blackbeard*. The dates and facts by no means tally. It is possible the second Teach may have at once borrowed the name and imitated the more excessive part of his manners from the first. Even the Master of Ballantrae could make admirers.

under way. Our situation was now very doubtful. The swamp was an unhealthful place to linger in ; we had been so greedy to bring treasures, that we had brought but little food ; it was highly desirable, besides, that we should get clear of the neighbourhood and into the settlements, before the news of the capture went abroad ; and against all these considerations, there was only the peril of the passage on the other side. I think it not wonderful we decided on the active part.

It was already blistering hot, when we set forth to pass the marsh, or rather to strike the path, by compass. Dutton took the compass, and one or other of us three carried his proportion of the treasure ; I promise you he kept a sharp eye to his rear, for it was like the man's soul that he must trust us with. The thicket was as close as a bush ; the ground very treacherous, so that we often sank in the most terrifying manner, and must go round about ; the heat, besides, was stifling, the air singularly heavy, and the stinging insects abounded in such myriads that each of us walked under his own cloud. It has often been commented on, how much better gentlemen of birth endure fatigue than persons of the rabble ; so that walking officers, who must tramp in the dirt beside their men, shame them by their constancy. This was well to be observed in the present instance ; for here were Ballantrae and I, two gentlemen of the highest breeding, on the one hand ; and on the other, Grady, a common mariner, and a man nearly a

giant in physical strength. The case of Dutton is not in point for I confess he did as well as any of us.* But as for Grady he began early to lament his case, tailed in the rear, refused to carry Dutton's packet when it came his turn, clamoured continually for rum (of which we had too little) and at last even threatened us from behind with a cocked pistol, unless we should allow him rest. Ballantrae would have fought it out, I believe; but I prevailed with him the other way; and we made a stop and ate a meal. It seemed to benefit Grady little; he was in the rear again at once, growling and bemoaning his lot; and at last, by some carelessness, not having followed properly in our tracks, stumbled into a deep part of the slough where it was mostly water, gave some very dreadful screams, and before we could come to his aid, had sunk along with his booty. His fate and above all these screams of his appalled us to the soul; yet it was on the whole a fortunate circumstance and the means of our deliverance. For it moved Dutton to mount into a tree, whence he was able to perceive and to show me, who had climbed after him, a high piece of the wood which was a landmark for the path. He went forward the more carelessly, I must suppose; for presently we saw him sink a little down, draw up his feet

* *Note by Mr. Mackellar:* And is not this the whole explanation? since this Dutton, exactly like the officers, enjoyed the stimulus of some responsibility.

and sink again, and so twice. Then he turned his face to us, pretty white.

“Lend a hand,” said he, “I am in a bad place.”

“I don’t know about that,” says Ballantrae, standing still.

Dutton broke out into the most violent oaths, sinking a little lower as he did, so that the mud was nearly to his waist ; and plucking a pistol from his belt, “Help me,” he cries, “or die and be damned to you !”

“Nay,” says Ballantrae, “I did but jest. I am coming.” And he set down his own packet and Dutton’s, which he was then carrying. “Do not venture near till we see if you are needed,” said he to me, and went forward alone to where the man was bogged. He was quiet now, though he still held the pistol ; and the marks of terror in his countenance were very moving to behold.

“For the Lord’s sake,” says he, “look sharp.”

Ballantrae was now got close up. “Keep still,” says he and seemed to consider ; and then “Reach out both your hands !”

Dutton laid down his pistol, and so watery was the top surface, that it went clear out of sight ; with an oath, he stooped to snatch it ; and as he did so, Ballantrae leaned forth and stabbed him between the shoulders. Up went his hands over his head, I know not whether with the pain or to ward himself ; and the next moment he doubled forward in the mud.

Ballantrae was already over the ankles, but he plucked himself out and came back to me, where I stood with my knees smiting one another. "The devil take you, Francis!" says he. "I believe you are a half-hearted fellow after all. I have only done justice on a pirate. And here we are quite clear of the *Sarah*! Who shall now say that we have dipped our hands in any irregularities?"

I assured him he did me injustice; but my sense of humanity was so much affected by the horridness of the fact that I could scarce find breath to answer with.

"Come," said he, "you must be more resolved. The need for this fellow ceased when he had shown you where the path ran; and you cannot deny I would have been daft to let slip so fair an opportunity."

I could not deny but he was right in principle; nor yet could I refrain from shedding tears, of which I think no man of valour need have been ashamed; and it was not until I had a share of the rum that I was able to proceed. I repeat I am far from ashamed of my generous emotion; mercy is honourable in the warrior; and yet I cannot altogether censure Ballantrae, whose step was really fortunate, as we struck the path without further misadventure, and the same night, about sundown, came to the edge of the morass.

We were too weary to seek far; on some dry sands still warm with the day's sun, and close under a wood

of pines, we lay down and were instantly plunged in sleep.

I awaked the next morning very early, to find Ballantrae already up and tampering with the packets ; not that at the moment I suspected his good faith ; though I observed the man to be confused, on my awaking, and to begin with a sullen spirit a conversation that came very near to end in blows. We were now cast on shore in the southern provinces, thousands of miles from any French settlement ; a dreadful journey and a thousand perils lay in front of us ; and sure, if there was ever need for amity, it was in such an hour. I must suppose that Ballantrae had suffered in his sense of what is truly polite ; indeed, and there is nothing strange in the idea, after the sea wolves we had consorted with so long ; and as for myself he fubbed me off unhandsomely and any gentleman would have resented his behaviour. Had I found him openly claim a greater share, I might have let that pass ; for an Irishman is always generous. But he gulled me, made a parade of generosity, gave me the more part of the gold ; and it was at last only by an accident and some boggling in his sleight of hand, that I discovered he had kept for himself some valuable jewels, worth upwards of a thousand pounds.

I told him in what light I saw his conduct ; he walked a little off, I following to upbraid him ; and at last he stopped me with his hand.

“Frank,” says he, “you know what we swore ; and yet there is no oath invented would induce me to swallow such expressions, if I did not regard you with sincere affection. It is impossible you should doubt me there : I have given proofs. Dutton I had to take, because he knew the pass, and Grady because Dutton would not move without him ; but what call was there to carry you along ? You are a perpetual danger to me with your cursed Irish tongue. By rights you should now be in irons in the cruiser. And you quarrel with me like a baby for some trinkets !”

I considered this one of the most unhandsome speeches ever made ; and indeed to this day I can scarce reconcile it to my notion of a gentleman that was my friend. I retorted upon him with his Scotch accent, of which he had not so much as some, but enough to be very barbarous and disgusting, as I told him plainly ; and the affair would have gone to a great length, but for an alarming intervention.

We had got some way off upon the sand. The place where we had slept, with the packets lying undone and the money scattered openly, was now between us and the pines ; and it was out of these the stranger must have come. There he was at least, a great hulking fellow of the country, with a broad axe on his shoulder, looking open-mouthed, now at the treasure which was just at his feet, and now at our disputation in which we had gone far enough to have weapons in our hands.

We had no sooner observed him than he found his legs and made off again among the pines.

This was no scene to put our minds at rest : a couple of armed men in sea-clothes found quarrelling over a treasure, not many miles from where a pirate had been captured—here was enough to bring the whole country about our ears. The quarrel was not even made up ; it was blotted from our minds ; and we got our packets together in the twinkling of an eye and made off running with the best will in the world. But the trouble was, we did not know in what direction, and must continually return upon our steps. Ballantrae had indeed collected what he could from Dutton ; but it's hard to travel upon hearsay ; and the estuary, which spreads into a vast irregular harbour, turned us off upon every side with a new stretch of water.

We were near beside ourselves and already quite spent with running, when coming to the top of a dune, we saw we were again cut off by another ramification of the bay. This was a creek, however, very different from those that had arrested us before ; being set in rocks, and so precipitously deep, that a small vessel was able to lie alongside, made fast with a hawser, and her crew had laid a plank to the shore. Here they had lighted a fire and were sitting at their meal. As for the vessel herself, she was one of those they build in the Bermudas.

The love of gold and the great hatred that everybody has to pirates were motives of the most influential, and

would certainly raise the country in our pursuit. Besides it was now plain we were on some sort of straggling peninsula like the fingers of a hand; and the wrist, or passage to the mainland, which we should have taken at the first, was by this time not improbably secured. These considerations put us on a bolder counsel. For as long as we dared, looking every moment to hear sounds of the chase, we lay among some bushes on the top of the dune; and having by this means secured a little breath and recomposed our appearance, we strolled down at last, with a great affectation of carelessness, to the party by the fire.

It was a trader and his negroes, belonging to Albany in the province of New York, and now on the way home from the Indies with a cargo; his name I cannot recall. We were amazed to learn he had put in here from terror of the *Sarah*; for we had no thought our exploits had been so notorious. As soon as the Albanian heard she had been taken the day before, he jumped to his feet, gave us a cup of spirits for our good news, and sent his negroes to get sail on the Bermudan. On our side, we profited by the dram to become more confidential, and at last offered ourselves as passengers. He looked askance at our tarry clothes and pistols, and replied civilly enough that he had scarce accommodation for himself; nor could either our prayers or our offers of money, in which we advanced pretty far, avail to shake him.

“I see you think ill of us,” says Ballantrae, “but I will show you how well we think of you by telling you the truth. We are Jacobite fugitives, and there is a price upon our heads.”

At this, the Albanian was plainly moved a little. He asked us many questions as to the Scotch war, which Ballantrae very patiently answered. And then, with a wink, in a vulgar manner, “I guess you and your Prince Charlie got more than you cared about,” said he.

“Bedad, and that we did,” said I. “And my dear man, I wish you would set a new example and give us just that much.”

This I said in the Irish way, about which there is allowed to be something very engaging. It’s a remarkable thing, and a testimony to the love with which our nation is regarded, that this address scarce ever fails in a handsome fellow. I cannot tell how often I have seen a private soldier escape the horse, or a beggar wheedle out a good alms, by a touch of the brogue. And indeed, as soon as the Albanian had laughed at me I was pretty much at rest. Even then, however, he made many conditions and (for one thing) took away our arms, before he suffered us aboard ; which was the signal to cast off ; so that in a moment after, we were gliding down the bay with a good breeze and blessing the name of God for our deliverance. Almost in the mouth of the estuary, we passed the cruiser, and a little after, the poor *Sarah* with her prize crew ; and these

were both sights to make us tremble. The Bermudan seemed a very safe place to be in, and our bold stroke to have been fortunately played, when we were thus reminded of the case of our companions. For all that, we had only exchanged traps, jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, run from the yard arm to the block, and escaped the open hostility of the man of war to lie at the mercy of the doubtful faith of our Albanian merchant.

From many circumstances, it chanced we were safer than we could have dared to hope. The town of Albany was at that time much concerned in contraband trade across the desert with the Indians and the French. This, as it was highly illegal, relaxed their loyalty, and as it brought them in relation with the politest people on the earth, divided even their sympathies. In short they were like all the smugglers in the world, spies and agents ready-made for either party. Our Albanian besides was a very honest man indeed, and very greedy ; and to crown our luck, he conceived a great delight in our society. Before we had reached the town of New York, we had come to a full agreement : that he should carry us as far as Albany upon his ship, and thence put us on a way to pass the boundaries and join the French. For all this we were to pay at a high rate ; but beggars cannot be choosers, nor outlaws bargainers.

We sailed, then, up the Hudson River which, I protest, is a very fine stream, and put up at the King's Arms in Albany. The town was full of the militia of the

province, breathing slaughter against the French. Governor Clinton was there himself, a very busy man, and by what I could learn, one very nearly distracted by the factiousness of his Assembly. The Indians on both sides were on the war path ; we saw parties of them bringing in prisoners and (what was much worse) scalps, both male and female, for which they were paid at a fixed rate ; and I assure you the sight was not encouraging. Altogether we could scarce have come at a period more unsuitable for our designs ; our position in the chief inn was dreadfully conspicuous : our Albanian fubbed us off with a thousand delays and seemed upon the point of a retreat from his engagements ; nothing but peril appeared to environ the poor fugitives ; and for some time, we drowned our concern in a very irregular course of living.

This too proved to be fortunate ; and it's one of the remarks that fall to be made upon our escape, how providentially our steps were conducted to the very end. What a humiliation to the dignity of man ! My philosophy, the extraordinary genius of Ballantrae, our valour, in which I grant that we were equal—all these might have proved insufficient without the Divine Blessing on our efforts. And how true it is, as the Church tells us, that the Truths of Religion are after all quite applicable even to daily affairs ! At least it was in the course of our revelry that we made the acquaintance of a spirited youth, by the name of Chew. He was one of the most

daring of the Indian traders, very well acquainted with the secret paths of the wilderness, needy, dissolute, and by a last good fortune, in some disgrace with his family. Him we persuaded to come to our relief ; he privately provided what was needful for our flight ; and one day we slipped out of Albany, without a word to our former friend, and embarked, a little above, in a canoe.

To the toils and perils of this journey, it would require a pen more elegant than mine to do full justice. The reader must conceive for himself the dreadful wilderness which we had now to thread ; its thickets, swamps, precipitous rocks, impetuous rivers, and amazing waterfalls. Among these barbarous scenes, we must toil all day, now paddling, now carrying our canoe upon our shoulders ; and at night we slept about a fire, surrounded by the howling of wolves and other savage animals. It was our design to mount the headwaters of the Hudson, to the neighbourhood of Crown Point ; where the French had a strong place in the woods, upon Lake Champlain. But to have done this directly were too perilous ; and it was accordingly gone upon by such a labyrinth of rivers, lakes and portages as makes my head giddy to remember. These paths were in ordinary times entirely desert ; but the country was now up, the tribes on the war path, the woods full of Indian scouts. Again and again we came upon these parties, when we least expected them ; and one day, in particular, I shall never forget ; how, as dawn was coming in,

we were suddenly surrounded by five or six of these painted devils, uttering a very dreary sort of cry and brandishing their hatchets. It passed off harmlessly indeed, as did the rest of our encounters ; for Chew was well known and highly valued among the different tribes. Indeed he was a very gallant, respectable young man. But even with the advantage of his companionship, you must not think these meetings were without sensible peril. To prove friendship on our part, it was needful to draw upon our stock of rum—indeed, under whatever disguise, that is the true business of the Indian trader, to keep a travelling public house in the forest ; and when once the braves had got their bottle of *scaura* (as they call this beastly liquor) it behooved us to set forth and paddle for our scalps. Once they were a little drunk, good bye to any sense or decency ; they had but the one thought, to get more *scaura* ; they might easily take it in their heads to give us chase ; and had we been overtaken, I had never written these memoirs.

We were come to the most critical portion of our course, where we might equally expect to fall into the hands of French or English, when a terrible calamity befell us. Chew was taken suddenly sick with symptoms like those of poison, and in the course of a few hours expired in the bottom of the canoe. We thus lost at once our guide, our interpreter, our boatman and our passport, for he was all these in one ; and found ourselves reduced, at a blow, to the most desperate and irremediable distress.

Chew, who took a great pride in his knowledge, had indeed often lectured us on the geography; and Ballantrae, I believe, would listen. But for my part I have always found such information highly tedious; and beyond the fact that we were now in the country of the Adirondack Indians, and not so distant from our destination, could we but have found the way, I was entirely ignorant. The wisdom of my course was soon the more apparent; for with all his pains, Ballantrae was no further advanced than myself. He knew we must continue to go up one stream; then, by way of a portage, down another; and then up a third. But you are to consider, in a mountain country, how many streams come rolling in from every hand. And how is a gentleman, who is a perfect stranger in that part of the world, to tell any one of them from any other? Nor was this our only trouble. We were great novices, besides, in handling a canoe; the portages were almost beyond our strength, so that I have seen us sit down in despair for half an hour at a time without one word; and the appearance of a single Indian, since we had now no means of speaking to them, would have been in all probability the means of our destruction. There is altogether some excuse if Ballantrae showed something of a glooming disposition; his habit of imputing blame to others, quite as capable as himself, was less tolerable, and his language it was not always easy to accept. Indeed he had contracted on board the pirate ship a manner of address which was in

a high degree unusual between gentlemen ; and now, when you might say he was in a fever, it increased upon him hugely.

The third day of these wanderings, as we were carrying the canoe upon a rocky portage, she fell and was entirely bilged. The portage was between two lakes, both pretty extensive ; the track, such as it was, opened at both ends upon the water, and on both hands was enclosed by the unbroken woods ; and the sides of the lakes were quite impassable with bog : so that we beheld ourselves not only condemned to go without our boat and the greater part of our provisions, but to plunge at once into impenetrable thickets and to desert what little guidance we still had,—the course of the river. Each stuck his pistols in his belt, shouldered an axe, made a pack of his treasure and as much food as he could stagger under ; and deserting the rest of our possessions, even to our swords, which would have much embarrassed us among the woods, set forth on this deplorable adventure. The labours of Hercules, so finely described by Homer, were a trifle to what we now underwent. Some parts of the forest were perfectly dense down to the ground, so that we must cut our way like mites in a cheese. In some the bottom was full of deep swamp, and the whole wood entirely rotten. I have leaped on a great fallen log and sunk to the knees in touchwood ; I have sought to stay myself, in falling, against what looked to be a solid trunk, and the whole thing has whiffed away at my touch like

a sheet of paper. Stumbling, falling, bogging to the knees, hewing our way, our eyes almost put out with twigs and branches, our clothes plucked from our bodies, we laboured all day, and it is doubtful if we made two miles. What was worse, as we could rarely get a view of the country and were perpetually justled from our path by obstacles, it was impossible even to have a guess in what direction we were moving.

A little before sundown, in an open place with a stream and set about with barbarous mountains, Ballantrae threw down his pack. "I will go no further," said he, and bade me light the fire, damning my blood in terms not proper for a chairman.

I told him to try to forget he had ever been a pirate, and to remember he had been a gentleman.

"Are you mad?" he cried. "Don't cross me here!" And then, shaking his fist at the hills, "To think," cries he, "that I must leave my bones in this miserable wilderness! Would God I had died upon the scaffold like a gentleman!" This he said ranting like an actor; and then sat biting his fingers and staring on the ground, a most unchristian object.

I took a certain horror of the man, for I thought a soldier and a gentleman should confront his end with more philosophy. I made him no reply, therefore, in words; and presently the evening fell so chill that I was glad, for my own sake, to kindle a fire. And yet God knows, in such an open spot, and the country alive

with savages, the act was little short of lunacy. Ballantrae seemed never to observe me ; but at last, as I was about parching a little corn, he looked up.

“Have you ever a brother ?” said he.

“By the blessing of heaven,” said I, “not less than five.”

“I have the one,” said he, with a strange voice ; and then presently, “He shall pay me for all this,” he added. And when I asked him what was his brother’s part in our distress, “What !” he cried, “he sits in my place, he bears my name, he courts my wife ; and I am here alone with a damned Irishman in this tooth-chattering desert ! O, I have been a common gull !” he cried.

The explosion was in all ways so foreign to my friend’s nature, that I was daunted out of all my just susceptibility. Sure, an offensive expression, however vivacious, appears a wonderfully small affair in circumstances so extreme ! But here there is a strange thing to be noted. He had only once before referred to the lady with whom he was contracted. That was when we came in view of the town of New York, when he had told me, if all had their rights, he was now in sight of his own property, for Miss Graeme enjoyed a large estate in the province. And this was certainly a natural occasion ; but now here she was named a second time ; and what is surely fit to be observed, in this very month, which was November, ’47, and *I believe upon that very*

day as we sat among these barbarous mountains, his brother and Miss Graeme were married. I am the least superstitious of men ; but the hand of Providence is here displayed too openly not to be remarked.*

The next day, and the next, were passed in similar labours ; Ballantrae often deciding on our course by the spinning of a coin ; and once, when I expostulated on this childishness, he had an odd remark that I have never forgotten. “I know no better way,” said he, “to express my scorn of human reason.” I think it was the third day, that we found the body of a Christian, scalped and most abominably mangled, and lying in a pudder of his blood ; the birds of the desert screaming over him, as thick as flies. I cannot describe how dreadfully this sight, affected us ; but it robbed me of all strength and all hope for this world. The same day, and only a little after, we were scrambling over a part of the forest that had been burned, when Ballantrae, who was a little ahead, ducked suddenly behind a fallen trunk. I joined him in this shelter, whence we could look abroad without being seen ourselves ; and in the bottom of the next vale, beheld a large war party of the savages going by across our line. There might be the value of a weak battalion present ; all naked to the waist, blacked with grease and suit, and painted with

* *Note by Mr. Mackellar* : A complete blunder : there was at this date no word of the marriage : see above in my own narration.

white lead and vermillion, according to their beastly habits. They went one behind another like a string of geese, and at a quickish trot ; so that they took but a little while to rattle by and disappear again among the woods. Yet I suppose we endured a greater agony of hesitation and suspense in these few minutes than goes usually to a man's whole life. Whether they were French or English Indians, whether they desired scalps or prisoners, whether we should declare ourselves upon the chance or lie quiet and continue the heart-breaking business of our journey : sure, I think, these were questions to have puzzled the brains of Aristotle himself. Ballantrae turned to me with a face all wrinkled up and his teeth showing in his mouth, like what I have read of people starving ; he said no word, but his whole appearance was a kind of dreadful question :

“ They may be of the English side,” I whispered ; “ and think ! the best we could then hope, is to begin this over again.”

“ I know, I know,” he said. “ Yet it must come to a plunge at last.” And he suddenly plucked out his coin, shook it in his closed hands, looked at it, and then lay down with his face in the dust.

Addition by Mr. Mackellar. I drop the Chevalier's narration at this point because the couple quarrelled and separated the same day ; and the Chevalier's account of the quarrel seems to me (I must confess) quite incompatible with the nature of either of the men. Hence-

forth, they wandered alone, undergoing extraordinary sufferings ; until first one and then the other was picked up by a party from Fort St. Frederick. Only two things are to be noted. And first (as most important for my purpose) that the Master, in the course of his miseries buried his treasure, at a point never since discovered, but of which he took a drawing in his own blood on the lining of his hat. And second, that on his coming thus penniless to the Fort, he was welcomed like a brother by the Chevalier, who thence paid his way to France. The simplicity of Mr. Burke's character leads him at this point to praise the Master exceedingly ; to an eye more worldly wise, it would seem it was the Chevalier alone that was to be commended. I have the more pleasure in pointing to this really very noble trait of my esteemed correspondent, as I fear I may have wounded him immediately before. I have refrained from comments on any of his extraordinary and (in my eyes) immoral opinions, for I know him to be jealous of respect. But his version of the quarrel is really more than I can reproduce ; for I knew the Master myself, and a man more insusceptible of fear is not conceivable. I regret this oversight of the Chevalier's, and all the more because the tenor of his narrative (set aside a few flourishes) strikes me as highly ingenuous.

IV.

ACCOUNT OF THE PERSECUTIONS ENDURED BY MR. HENRY.

YOU can guess on what part of his adventures the Colonel principally dwelled. Indeed, if we had heard it all, it is to be thought the current of this business had been wholly altered ; but the pirate ship was very gently touched upon. Nor did I hear the Colonel to an end even of that which he was willing to disclose ; for Mr. Henry, having for some while been plunged in a brown study, rose at last from his seat and (reminding the Colonel there were matters that he must attend to) bade me follow him immediately to the office.

Once there, he sought no longer to dissemble his concern, walking to and fro in the room with a contorted face, and passing his hand repeatedly upon his brow.

“ We have some business,” he began at last ; and there broke off, declared we must have wine, and sent for a magnum of the best. This was extremely foreign to his habitudes ; and what was still more so, when the wine had come, he gulped down one glass upon another like a man careless of appearances. But the drink steadied him.

“You will scarce be surprised, Mackellar,” says he, “when I tell you that my brother (whose safety we are all rejoiced to learn) stands in some need of money.”

I told him I had misdoubted as much ; but the time was not very fortunate as the stock was low.

“Not mine,” said he. “There is the money for the mortgage.”

I reminded him it was Mrs. Henry’s.

“I will be answerable to my wife,” he cried violently.

“And then,” said I, “there is the mortgage.”

“I know,” said he, “it is on that I would consult you.”

I showed him how unfortunate a time it was to divert this money from its destination ; and how by so doing we must lose the profit of our past economies, and plunge back the estate into the mire. I even took the liberty to plead with him ; and when he still opposed me with a shake of the head and a bitter dogged smile, my zeal quite carried me beyond my place. “This is midsummer madness,” cried I ; “and I for one will be no party to it.”

“You speak as though I did it for my pleasure,” says he. “But I have a child now ; and besides I love order ; and to say the honest truth, Mackellar, I had begun to take a pride in the estates.” He gloomed for a moment. “But what would you have ?” he went on. “Nothing is mine, nothing. This day’s news has knocked the bottom out of my life. I have only the

name and the shadow of things; only the shadow; there is no substance in my rights."

"They will prove substantial enough before the court," said I.

He looked at me with a burning eye, and seemed to repress the word upon his lips; and I repented what I had said, for I saw that while he spoke of the estates he had still a side-thought to his marriage. And then, of a sudden, he twitched the letter from his pocket, where it lay all crumpled, smoothed it violently on the table, and read these words to me with a trembling tongue. "'My dear Jacob'—This is how he begins!" cries he—"My dear Jacob, I once called you so, you may remember; and you have now done the business, and flung my heels as high as Criffel.' What do you think of that, Mackellar," says he, "from an only brother? I declare to God I liked him very well; I was always stanch to him; and this is how he writes! But I will not sit down under the imputation—" (walking to and fro)—"I am as good as he, I am a better man than he, I call on God to prove it! I cannot give him all the monstrous sum he asks; he knows the estate to be incompetent; but I will give him what I have, and it is more than he expects. I have borne all this too long. See what he writes further on; read it for yourself: 'I know you are a niggardly dog.' A niggardly dog! I, niggardly? Is that true, Mackellar? You think it is?" I really thought he would have

struck me at that. "O, you all think so! Well, you shall see, and he shall see, and God shall see. If I ruin the estate and go barefoot, I shall stuff this bloodsucker. Let him ask all—all, and he shall have it! It is all his by rights. Ah!" he cried, "and I foresaw all this and worse, when he would not let me go." He poured out another glass of wine and was about to carry it to his lips, when I made so bold as to lay a finger on his arm. He stopped a moment. "You are very right," said he, and flung glass and all in the fire-place. "Come, let us count the money."

I durst no longer oppose him; indeed I was very much affected by the sight of so much disorder in a man usually so controlled; and we sat down together, counted the money, and made it up in packets for the greater ease of Colonel Burke, who was to be the bearer. This done, Mr. Henry returned to the hall, where he and my old lord sat all night through with their guest.

A little before dawn I was called and set out with the Colonel. He would scarce have liked a less responsible convoy, for he was a man who valued himself; nor could we afford him one more dignified, for Mr. Henry must not appear with the freetraders. It was a very bitter morning of wind, and as we went down through the long shrubbery, the Colonel held himself muffled in his cloak.

"Sir," said I, "this is a great sum of money that

your friend requires. I must suppose his necessities to be very great."

"We must suppose so," says he, I thought drily, but perhaps it was the cloak about his mouth.

"I am only a servant of the family," said I. "You may deal openly with me. I think we are likely to get little good by him?"

"My dear man," said the Colonel, "Ballantrae is a gentleman of the most eminent natural abilities, and a man that I admire and that I revere, to the very ground he treads on." And then he seemed to me to pause like one in a difficulty.

"But for all that," said I, "we are likely to get little good by him?"

"Sure, and you can have it your own way, my dear man," says the Colonel.

By this time we had come to the side of the creek, where the boat awaited him. "Well," said he, "I am sure I am very much your debtor for all your civility, Mr. Whatever-your-name-is; and just as a last word, and since you show so much intelligent interest, I will mention a small circumstance that may be of use to the family. For I believe my friend omitted to mention that he has the largest pension on the Scotch Fund of any refugee in Paris; and it's the more disgraceful, sir," cries the Colonel, warming, "because there's not one dirty penny for myself."

He cocked his hat at me, as if I had been to blame for

this partiality ; then changed again into his usual swaggering civility, shook me by the hand, and set off down to the boat, with the money under his arms, and whistling as he went the pathetic air of *Shule Aroon*. It was the first time I had heard that tune ; I was to hear it again, words and all, as you shall learn ; but I remember how that little stave of it rang in my head, after the freetraders had bade him “ Wheesht, in the deil’s name,” and the grating of the oars had taken its place, and I stood and watched the dawn creeping on the sea, and the boat drawing away, and the lugger lying with her foresail backed awaiting it.

THE gap made in our money was a sore embarrassment ; and among other consequences, it had this : that I must ride to Edinburgh, and there raise a new loan on very questionable terms to keep the old afloat ; and was thus, for close upon three weeks, absent from the house of Durrisdeer.

What passed in the interval, I had none to tell me ; but I found Mrs. Henry, upon my return, much changed in her demeanour ; the old talks with my lord for the most part pretermitted ; a certain deprecation visible towards her husband, to whom I thought she addressed herself more often ; and for one thing, she was now greatly wrapped up in Miss Katharine. You would think the change was agreeable to Mr. Henry ! no such matter ! To the contrary, every circumstance of alter-

ation was a stab to him ; he read in each the avowal of her truant fancies :—that constancy to the Master of which she was proud while she supposed him dead, she had to blush for now she knew he was alive : and these blushes were the hated spring of her new conduct. I am to conceal no truth ; and I will here say plainly, I think this was the period in which Mr. Henry showed the worst. He contained himself, indeed, in public ; but there was a deep-seated irritation visible underneath. With me, from whom he had less concealment, he was often grossly unjust ; and even for his wife, he would sometimes have a sharp retort : perhaps when she had ruffled him with some unwonted kindness ; perhaps upon no tangible occasion, the mere habitual tenor of the man's annoyance bursting spontaneously forth. When he would thus forget himself (a thing so strangely out of keeping with the terms of their relation), there went a shock through the whole company ; and the pair would look upon each other in a kind of pained amazement.

All the time too, while he was injuring himself by this defect of temper, he was hurting his position by a silence, of which I scarce know whether to say it was the child of generosity or pride. The freetraders came again and again, bringing messengers from the Master, and none departed empty handed. I never durst reason with Mr. Henry ; he gave what was asked of him in a kind of noble rage. Perhaps because he knew he was by nature inclining to the parsimonious, he took a back-

foremost pleasure in the recklessness with which he supplied his brother's exigence. Perhaps the falsity of the position would have spurred a humbler man into the same excesses. But the estate (if I may say so) groaned under it ; our daily expenses were shorn lower and lower ; the stables were emptied, all but four roadsters ; servants were discharged, which raised a dreadful murmuring in the country and heated up the old disfavour upon Mr. Henry ; and at last the yearly visit to Edinburgh must be discontinued.

This was in 1756. You are to suppose that for seven years this bloodsucker had been drawing the life's blood from Durrisdeer ; and that all this time, my patron had held his peace. It was an effect of devilish malice in the Master, that he addressed Mr. Henry alone upon the matter of his demands ; and there was never a word to my lord. The family had looked on wondering at our economies. They had lamented, I have no doubt, that my patron had become so great a miser ; a fault always despicable, but in the young abhorrent ; and Mr. Henry was not yet thirty years of age. Still he had managed the business of Durisdeer almost from a boy ; and they bore with these changes in a silence as proud and bitter as his own, until the coping stone of the Edinburgh visit.

At this time, I believe my patron and his wife were rarely together save at meals. Immediately on the back of Colonel Burke's announcement, Mrs. Henry made palpable advances ; you might say she had laid a sort of timid

court to her husband, different indeed from her former manner of unconcern and distance. I never had the heart to blame Mr. Henry because he recoiled from these advances ; nor yet to censure the wife, when she was cut to the quick by their rejection. But the result was an entire estrangement, so that (as I say) they rarely spoke except at meals. Even the matter of the Edinburgh visit was first broached at table ; and it chanced that Mrs. Henry was that day ailing and querulous. She had no sooner understood her husband's meaning, than the red flew in her face.

“At last,” she cried, “this is too much ! Heaven knows what pleasure I have in my life, that I should be denied my only consolation. These shameful proclivities must be trod down ; we are already a mark and an eyesore in the neighbourhood ; I will not endure this fresh insanity.”

“I cannot afford it,” says Mr. Henry.

“Afford ?” she cried. “For shame ! But I have money of my own.”

“That is all mine, madam, by marriage,” he snarled, and instantly left the room.

My old lord threw up his hands to heaven, and he and his daughter, withdrawing to the chimney, gave me a broad hint to be gone. I found Mr. Henry in his usual retreat, the steward's room, perched on the end of the table and plunging his penknife in it, with a very ugly countenance.

“Mr. Henry,” said I, “you do yourself too much injustice ; and it is time this should cease.”

“O !” cries he, “nobody minds here. They think it only natural. I have shameful proclivities. I am a niggardly dog,” and he drove his knife up to the hilt. “But I will show that fellow,” he cried with an oath, “I will show him which is the more generous.”

“This is no generosity,” said I, “this is only pride.”

“Do you think I want morality ?” he asked.

I thought he wanted help, and I should give it him, willy-nilly ; and no sooner was Mrs. Henry gone to her room, than I presented myself at her door and sought admittance.

She openly showed her wonder. “What do you want with me, Mr. Mackellar ?” said she.

“The Lord knows, madam,” says I, “I have never troubled you before with any freedoms ; but this thing lies too hard upon my conscience, and it will out. Is it possible that two people can be so blind as you and my lord ? and have lived all these years with a noble gentleman like Mr. Henry, and understand so little of his nature ?”

“What does this mean ?” she cried.

“Do you not know where his money goes to ? his—and yours—and the money for the very wine he does not drink at table ?” I went on. “To Paris—to that man ! Eight thousand pounds has he had of us in

seven years, and my patron fool enough to keep it secret !”

“Eight thousand pounds !” she repeated. “It is impossible, the estate is not sufficient.”

“God knows how we have sweated farthings to produce it,” said I. “But eight thousand and sixty is the sum, beside odd shillings. And if you can think my patron miserly after that, this shall be my last interference.”

“You need say no more, Mr. Mackellar,” said she. “You have done most properly in what you too modestly call your interference. I am much to blame ; you must think me indeed a very unobservant wife”—(looking upon me with a strange smile)—“but I shall put this right at once. The Master was always of a very thoughtless nature ; but his heart is excellent ; he is the soul of generosity. I shall write to him myself. You cannot think how you have pained me by this communication.”

“Indeed, madam, I had hoped to have pleased you,” said I, for I raged to see her still thinking of the Master.

“And pleased,” said she, “and pleased me of course.”

That same day (I will not say but what I watched) I had the satisfaction to see Mr. Henry come from his wife’s room in a state most unlike himself ; for his face was all bloated with weeping, and yet he seemed to me to walk upon the air. By this, I was sure his wife had

made him full amends for once ; “ Ah,” thought I, to myself, “ I have done a brave stroke this day.”

On the morrow, as I was seated at my books, Mr. Henry came in softly behind me, took me by the shoulders and shook me in a manner of playfulness. “ I find you are a faithless fellow after all,” says he ; which was his only reference to my part, but the tone he spoke in was more to me than any eloquence of protestation. Nor was this all I had effected ; for when the next messenger came (as he did not long afterwards) from the Master, he got nothing away with him but a letter. For some while back, it had been I myself who had conducted these affairs ; Mr. Henry not setting pen to paper, and I only in the dryest and most formal terms. But this letter I did not even see ; it would scarce be pleasant reading, for Mr. Henry felt he had his wife behind him for once, and I observed, on the day it was dispatched, he had a very gratified expression.

Things went better now in the family, though it could scarce be pretended they went well. There was now at least no misconception ; there was kindness upon all sides ; and I believe my patron and his wife might again have drawn together, if he could but have pocketed his pride, and she forgot (what was the ground of all) her brooding on another man. It is wonderful how a private thought leaks out ; it is wonderful to me now, how we should all have followed the current of her sentiments ; and though she bore herself quietly, and had a

very even disposition, yet we should have known whenever her fancy ran to Paris. And would not any one have thought that my disclosure must have rooted up that idol ? I think there is the devil in women : all these years passed, never a sight of the man, little enough kindness to remember (by all accounts) even while she had him, the notion of his death intervening, his heartless rapacity laid bare to her : that all should not do, and she must still keep the best place in her heart for this accursed fellow, is a thing to make a plain man rage. I had never much natural sympathy for the passion of love ; but this unreason in my patron's wife disgusted me outright with the whole matter. I remember checking a maid, because she sang some bairnly kickshaw while my mind was thus engaged ; and my asperity brought about my ears the enmity of all the petticoats about the house ; of which I recked very little, but it amused Mr. Henry, who rallied me much upon our joint unpopularity. It is strange enough (for my own mother was certainly one of the salt of the earth and my Aunt Dickson, who paid my fees at the University, a very notable woman) but I have never had much toleration for the female sex, possibly not much understanding ; and being far from a bold man, I have ever shunned their company. Not only do I see no cause to regret this diffidence in myself, but have invariably remarked the most unhappy consequences follow those who were less wise. So much I thought proper to set down, lest

I show myself unjust to Mrs. Henry. And besides the remark arose naturally, on a reperusal of the letter which was the next step in these affairs, and reached me to my sincere astonishment by a private hand, some week or so after the departure of the last messenger.

*Letter from Colonel BURKE (afterwards Chevalier) to MR.
MACKELLAR.*

TROYES IN CHAMPAGNE, }
July 12, 1756. }

My Dear Sir :—You will doubtless be surprised to receive a communication from one so little known to you ; but on the occasion I had the good fortune to rencounter you at Durrisdier, I remarked you for a young man of a solid gravity of character : a qualification which I profess I admire and revere next to natural genius or the bold chivalrous spirit of the soldier. I was besides interested in the noble family which you have the honour to serve or (to speak more by the book) to be the humble and respected friend of ; and a conversation I had the pleasure to have with you very early in the morning has remained much upon my mind.

Being the other day in Paris, on a visit from this famous city where I am in garrison, I took occasion to inquire your name (which I profess I had forgot) at my friend, the Master of B. ; and a fair opportunity occurring, I write to inform you of what's new.

The Master of B. (when we had last some talk of him together) was in receipt, as I think I then told you, of a highly advantageous pension on the Scots Fund. He next received a company, and was soon after advanced to a regiment of his own. My dear Sir, I do not offer to explain this circumstance ; any more than why I myself, who have rid at the right hand of Princes, should be fubbed off with a pair of colours and sent to rot in a hole at the bottom of the province. Accustomed as I am to courts, I cannot

but feel it is no atmosphere for a plain soldier ; and I could never hope to advance by similar means, even could I stoop to the endeavour. But our friend has a particular aptitude to succeed by the means of ladies ; and if all be true that I have heard, he enjoyed a remarkable protection. It is like this turned against him ; for when I had the honour to shake him by the hand, he was but newly released from the Bastille where he had been cast on a sealed letter ; and though now released, has both lost his regiment and his pension. My dear Sir, the loyalty of a plain Irishman will ultimately succeed in the place of craft ; as I am sure a gentleman of your probity will agree.

Now, Sir, the Master is a man whose genius I admire beyond expression, and besides he is my friend ; but I thought a little word of this revolution in his fortunes would not come amiss, for in my opinion, the man's desperate. He spoke when I saw him of a trip to India (whither I am myself in some hope of accompanying my illustrious countryman, Mr. Lally) ; but for this he would require (as I understood) more money than was readily at his command. You may have heard a military proverb ; that it is a good thing to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy ? I trust you will take my meaning ;—and I subscribe myself, with proper respects to my Lord Durrishdeer, to his son, and to the beauteous Mrs. Durie,

My dear Sir,

Your obedient humble servant

FRANCIS BURKE.

This missive I carried at once to Mr. Henry ; and I think there was but the one thought between the two of us : that it had come a week too late. I made haste to send an answer to Colonel Burke, in which I begged him, if he should see the Master, to assure him his next

messenger would be attended to. But with all my haste I was not in time to avert what was impending ; the arrow had been drawn, it must now fly. I could almost doubt the power of providence (and certainly his will) to stay the issue of events ; and it is a strange thought, how many of us had been storing up the elements of this catastrophe, for how long a time, and with how blind an ignorance of what we did.

FROM the coming of the Colonel's letter, I had a spy-glass in my room, began to drop questions to the tenant folk, and as there was no great secrecy observed and the freetrade (in our part) went by force as much as stealth, I had soon got together a knowledge of the signals in use, and knew pretty well to an hour when any messenger might be expected. I say I questioned the tenants ; for with the traders themselves, desperate blades that went habitually armed, I could never bring myself to meddle willingly. Indeed, by what proved in the sequel an unhappy chance, I was an object of scorn to some of these braggadocios ; who had not only gratified me with a nickname, but catching me one night upon a by-path and being all (as they would have said) somewhat merry, had caused me to dance for their diversion. The method employed was that of cruelly chipping at my toes with naked cutlasses, shouting at the same time "Square-Toes" ; and though they did me no bodily mischief, I was none the less deplorably

affected and was indeed for several days confined to my bed : a scandal on the state of Scotland on which no comment is required.

It happened on the afternoon of November 7th, in this same unfortunate year, that I espied, during my walk, the smoke of a beacon fire upon the Muckleross. It was drawing near time for my return ; but the uneasiness upon my spirits was that day so great, that I must burst through the thickets to the edge of what they call the Craig Head. The sun was already down, but there was still a broad light in the west, which showed me some of the smugglers treading out their signal fire upon the Ross, and in the bay the lugger lying with her sails brailed up. She was plainly but new come to anchor, and yet the skiff was already lowered and pulling for the landing place at the end of the long shrubbery. And this I knew could signify but one thing, the coming of a messenger for Durrisdeer.

I laid aside the remainder of my terrors, clambered down the brae—a place I had never ventured through before, and was hid among the shore-side thickets in time to see the boat touch. Captain Crail himself was steering, a thing not usual ; by his side there sat a passenger ; and the men gave way with difficulty, being hampered with near upon half a dozen portmanteaus, great and small. But the business of landing was briskly carried through ; and presently the baggage was all tumbled on shore, the boat on its return voyage to

the lugger, and the passenger standing alone upon the point of rock, a tall slender figure of a gentleman, habited in black, with a sword by his side and a walking cane upon his wrist. As he so stood, he waved the cane to Captain Crail by way of salutation, with something both of grace and mockery that wrote the gesture deeply on my mind.

No sooner was the boat away with my sworn enemies, than I took a sort of half courage, came forth to the margin of the thicket, and there halted again, my mind being greatly pulled about between natural diffidence and a dark foreboding of the truth. Indeed I might have stood there swithering all night, had not the stranger turned, spied me through the mists, which were beginning to fall, and waved and cried on me to draw near. I did so with a heart like lead.

“Here, my good man,” said he, in the English accent, “here are some things for Durrisindeer.”

I was now near enough to see him, a very handsome figure and countenance, swarthy, lean, long, with a quick, alert, black look, as of one who was a fighter and accustomed to command; upon one cheek, he had a mole, not unbecoming; a large diamond sparkled on his hand; his clothes, although of the one hue, were of a French and foppish design; his ruffles, which he wore longer than common, of exquisite lace; and I wondered the more to see him in such a guise, when he was but newly landed from a dirty smuggling lugger. At the

same time, he had a better look at me, toised me a second time sharply, and then smiled.

“I wager, my friend,” says he, “that I know both your name and your nickname. I divined these very clothes upon your hand of writing, Mr. Mackellar.”

At these words, I fell to shaking.

“O,” says he, “you need not be afraid of me. I bear no malice for your tedious letters ; and it is my purpose to employ you a good deal. You may call me Mr. Bally : it is the name I have assumed ; or rather (since I am addressing so great a precision) it is so I have curtailed my own. Come now, pick up that and that”—indicating two of the portmanteaus. “That will be as much as you are fit to bear, and the rest can very well wait. Come, lose no more time, if you please.”

His tone was so cutting that I managed to do as he bid by a sort of instinct, my mind being all the time quite lost. No sooner had I picked up the portmanteaus, than he turned his back and marched off through the long shrubbery ; where it began already to be dusk, for the wood is thick and evergreen. I followed behind, loaded almost to the dust, though I profess I was not conscious of the burthen ; being swallowed up in the monstrosity of this return and my mind flying like a weaver’s shuttle.

On a sudden I set the portmanteaus to the ground and halted. He turned and looked back at me.

“Well?” said he.

“You are the Master of Ballantrae?”

“You will do me the justice to observe,” says he, “that I have made no secret with the astute Mackellar.”

“And in the name of God,” cries I, “what brings you here? Go back, while it is yet time.”

“I thank you,” said he. “Your master has chosen this way, and not I; but since he has made the choice, he (and you also) must abide by the result. And now pick up these things of mine, which you have set down in a very boggy place, and attend to that which I have made your business.”

But I had no thought now of obedience; I came straight up to him. “If nothing will move you to go back,” said I; “though sure, under all the circumstances, any Christian or even any gentleman would scruple to go forward. . . .”

“These are gratifying expressions,” he threw in.

“If nothing will move you to go back,” I continued, “there are still some decencies to be observed. Wait here with your baggage, and I will go forward and prepare your family. Your father is an old man; and—” I stumbled—“there are decencies to be observed.”

“Truly,” said he, “this Mackellar improves upon acquaintance. But look you here, my man, and understand it once for all—you waste your breath upon me, and I go my own way with inevitable motion.”

“Ah !” says I. “Is that so ? We shall see then !”

And I turned and took to my heels for Durrisdeer. He clutched at me and cried out angrily, and then I believe I heard him laugh, and then I am certain he pursued me for a step or two, and (I suppose) desisted. One thing at least is sure, that I came but a few minutes later to the door of the great house, nearly strangled for the lack of breath but quite alone. Straight up the stair I ran, and burst into the hall, and stopped before the family without the power of speech ; but I must have carried my story in my looks for they rose out of their places and stared on me like changelings.

“He has come,” I panted out at last.

“He ?” said Mr. Henry.

“Himself,” said I.

“My son ?” cried my lord. “Imprudent, imprudent boy ! O, could he not stay where he was safe !”

Never a word said Mrs. Henry ; nor did I look at her, I scarce knew why.

“Well,” said Mr. Henry, with a very deep breath, “and where is he ?”

“I left him in the long shrubbery,” said I.

“Take me to him,” said he.

So we went out together, he and I, without another word from any one ; and in the midst of the gravelled plot, encountered the Master strolling up, whistling as he came and beating the air with his cane. There was

still light enough overhead to recognise though not to read a countenance.

“Ah, Jacob!” says the Master. “So here is Esau back.”

“James,” says Mr. Henry, “for God’s sake, call me by my name. I will not pretend that I am glad to see you; but I would fain make you as welcome as I can in the house of our fathers.”

“Or in *my* house? or *yours*?” says the Master. “Which was you about to say? But this is an old sore, and we need not rub it. If you would not share with me in Paris, I hope you will yet scarce deny your elder brother a corner of the fire at Durrisdeer?”

“That is very idle speech,” replied Mr. Henry. “And you understand the power of your position excellently well.”

“Why, I believe I do,” said the other with a little laugh. And this, though they had never touched hands, was (as we may say) the end of the brothers’ meeting; for at this, the Master turned to me and bade me fetch his baggage.

I, on my side, turned to Mr. Henry for a confirmation; perhaps with some defiance.

“As long as the Master is here, Mr. Mackellar, you will very much oblige me by regarding his wishes as you would my own,” says Mr. Henry. “We are constantly troubling you: will you be so good as send one of the servants?”—with an accent on the word.

If this speech were anything at all, it was surely a well deserved reproof upon the stranger ; and yet, so devilish was his impudence, he twisted it the other way.

“And shall we be common enough to say ‘Sneck up?’” inquires he softly, looking upon me sideways.

Had a kingdom depended on the act, I could not have trusted myself in words ; even to call a servant was beyond me ; I had rather serve the man myself than speak ; and I turned away in silence and went into the long shrubbery, with a heart full of anger and despair. It was dark under the trees, and I walked before me and forgot what business I was come upon, till I near broke my shin on the portmanteaus. Then it was that I remarked a strange particular ; for whereas I had before carried both and scarce observed it, it was now as much as I could do to manage one. And this, as it forced me to make two journeys, kept me the longer from the hall.

When I got there the business of welcome was over long ago ; the company was already at supper ; and by an oversight that cut me to the quick, my place had been forgotten. I had seen one side of the Master’s return ; now I was to see the other. It was he who first remarked my coming in and standing back (as I did) in some annoyance. He jumped from his seat.

“And if I have not got the good Mackellar’s place !” cries he. “John lay another for Mr. Bally ; I protest he will disturb no one, and your table is big enough for all.”

I could scarce credit my ears ; nor yet my senses when he took me by the shoulders and thrust me laughing into my own place ; such an affectionate playfulness was in his voice. And while John laid the fresh place for him (a thing on which he still insisted) he went and leaned on his father's chair and looked down upon him, and the old man turned about and looked upwards on his son, with such a pleasant mutual tenderness, that I could have carried my hand to my head in mere amazement.

Yet all was of a piece. Never a harsh word fell from him, never a sneer showed upon his lip. He had laid aside even his cutting English accent, and spoke with the kindly Scots tongue, that sets a value on affectionate words ; and though his manners had a graceful elegance mighty foreign to our ways in Durrisdeer, it was still a homely courtliness, that did not shame but flattered us. All that he did throughout the meal, indeed, drinking wine with me with a notable respect, turning about for a pleasant word with John, fondling his father's hand, breaking into little merry tales of his adventures, calling up the past with happy reference—all he did was so becoming, and himself so handsome, that I could scarce wonder if my lord and Mrs. Henry sat about the board with radiant faces, or if John waited behind with dropping tears.

As soon as supper was over, Mrs. Henry rose to withdraw.

“This was never your way, Alison,” said he.

“It is my way now,” she replied : which was notoriously false, “and I will give you a good-night James, and a welcome—from the dead,” said she, and her voice drooped and trembled.

Poor Mr. Henry, who had made rather a heavy figure through the meal, was more concerned than ever : pleased to see his wife withdraw, and yet half displeased, as he thought upon the cause of it ; and the next moment altogether dashed by the fervour of her speech.

On my part, I thought I was now one too many ; and was stealing after Mrs. Henry, when the Master saw me.

“Now, Mr. Mackellar,” says he, “I take this near on an unfriendliness. I cannot have you go : this is to make a stranger of the prodigal son—and let me remind you where—in his own father’s house ! Come, sit ye down, and drink another glass with Mr. Bally.”

“Ay, ay, Mr. Mackellar,” says my lord, “we must not make a stranger either of him or you. I have been telling my son,” he added, his voice brightening as usual on the word, “how much we valued all your friendly service.”

So I sat there silent till my usual hour ; and might have been almost deceived in the man’s nature, but for one passage in which his perfidy appeared too plain. Here was the passage ; of which, after what he knows of the brothers’ meeting, the reader shall consider for

himself. Mr. Henry sitting somewhat dully, in spite of his best endeavours to carry things before my lord, up jumps the Master, passes about the board, and claps his brother on the shoulder.

“Come, come, *Hairry lad*,” says he, with a broad accent such as they must have used together when they were boys, “you must not be downcast because your brother has come home. All’s yours, that’s sure enough, and little I grudge it you. Neither must you grudge me my place beside my father’s fire.”

“And that is too true, Henry,” says my old lord with a little frown, a thing rare with him. “You have been the elder brother of the parable in the good sense ; you must be careful of the other.”

“I am easily put in the wrong,” said Mr. Henry.

“Who puts you in the wrong ?” cried my lord, I thought very tartly for so mild a man. “You have earned my gratitude and your brother’s many thousand times ; you may count on its endurance ; and let that suffice.”

“Ay, Harry, that you may,” said the Master ; and I thought Mr. Henry looked at him with a kind of wildness in his eye.

V.

ON all the miserable business that now followed, I have four questions that I asked myself often at the time and ask myself still. Was the man moved by a particular sentiment against Mr. Henry ? or by what he thought to be his interest ? or by a mere delight in cruelty such as cats display and theologians tell us of the devil ? or by what he would have called love ? My common opinion halts among the three first ; but perhaps there lay at the spring of his behaviour, an element of all. As thus : Animosity to Mr. Henry would explain his hateful usage of him when they were alone ; the interests he came to serve would explain his very different attitude before my lord ; that and some spice of a design of gallantry, his care to stand well with Mrs. Henry ; and the pleasure of malice for itself, the pains he was continually at to mingle and oppose these lines of conduct.

Partly because I was a very open friend to my patron, partly because in my letters to Paris I had often given myself some freedom of remonstrance, I was included in his diabolical amusement. When I was alone with him, he pursued me with sneers ; before the family, he used me with the extreme of friendly conde-

scension. This was not only painful in itself ; not only did it put me continually in the wrong ; but there was in it an element of insult indescribable. That he should thus leave me out in his dissimulation, as though even my testimony were too despicable to be considered, galled me to the blood. But what it was to me is not worth notice. I make but memorandum of it here ; and chiefly for this reason, that it had one good result, and gave me the quicker sense of Mr. Henry's martyrdom.

It was on him the burthen fell. How was he to respond to the public advances of one who never lost a chance of gibing him in private ? How was he to smile back on the deceiver and the insulter ? He was condemned to seem ungracious. He was condemned to silence. Had he been less proud, had he spoken, who would have credited the truth ? The acted calumny had done its work ; my lord and Mrs. Henry were the daily witnesses of what went on ; they could have sworn in court that the Master was a model of long-suffering good-nature and Mr. Henry a pattern of jealousy and thanklessness. And ugly enough as these must have appeared in any one, they seemed tenfold uglier in Mr. Henry ; for who could forget that the Master lay in peril of his life, and that he had already lost his mistress, his title and his fortune ?

“Henry, will you ride with me ?” asks the Master one day.

And Mr. Henry, who had been goaded by the man all morning, raps out : “I will not.”

“I sometimes wish you would be kinder, Henry,” says the other wistfully.

I give this for a specimen ; but such scenes befell continually. Small wonder if Mr. Henry was blamed ; small wonder if I fretted myself into something near upon a bilious fever ; nay, and at the mere recollection feel a bitterness in my blood.

Sure, never in this world was a more diabolical contrivance : so perfidious, so simple, so impossible to combat. And yet I think again, and I think always, Mrs. Henry might have read between the lines ; she might have had more knowledge of her husband’s nature ; after all these years of marriage, she might have commanded or captured his confidence. And my old lord too, that very watchful gentleman, where was all his observation ? But for one thing, the deceit was practised by a master hand, and might have gulled an angel. For another (in the case of Mrs. Henry), I have observed there are no persons so far away as those who are both married and estranged, so that they seem out of earshot or to have no common tongue. For a third (in the case of both of these spectators), they were blinded by old, ingrained predilection. And for a fourth, the risk the Master was supposed to stand in (supposed, I say—you will soon hear why) made it seem the more ungenerous to criticise ; and keeping them in a perpetual tender so-

licitude about his life, blinded them the more effectually to his faults.

It was during this time that I perceived most clearly the effect of manner, and was led to lament most deeply the plainness of my own. Mr. Henry had the essence of a gentleman ; when he was moved, when there was any call of circumstance, he could play his part with dignity and spirit ; but in the day's commerce (it is idle to deny it) he fell short of the ornamental. The Master (on the other hand) had never a movement but it commended him. So it befell, that when the one appeared gracious and the other ungracious, every trick of their bodies seemed to call out confirmation. Nor that alone : but the more deeply Mr. Henry floundered in his brother's toils, the more clownish he grew ; and the more the Master enjoyed his spiteful entertainment, the more engagingly, the more smilingly, he went ! So that the plot, by its own scope and progress, furthered and confirmed itself.

It was one of the man's arts to use the peril in which (as I say) he was supposed to stand. He spoke of it to those who loved him with a gentle pleasantry, which made it the more touching. To Mr. Henry, he used it as a cruel weapon of offence. I remember his laying his finger on the clean lozenge of the painted window, one day when we three were alone together in the hall. "Here went your lucky guinea, Jacob," said he. And when Mr. Henry only looked upon him darkly, "O,"

he added, "you need not look such impotent malice, my good fly. You can be rid of your spider when you please. How long, O Lord? When are you to be wrought to the point of a denunciation, scrupulous brother? It is one of my interests in this dreary hole. I ever loved experiment." Still Mr. Henry only stared upon him with a glooming brow, and a changed colour; and at last the Master broke out in a laugh and clapped him on the shoulder, calling him a sulky dog. At this my patron leaped back with a gesture I thought very dangerous; and I must suppose the Master thought so too; for he looked the least in the world discountenanced, and I do not remember him again to have laid hands on Mr. Henry.

But though he had his peril always on his lips in the one way or the other, I thought his conduct strangely incautious, and began to fancy the government (who had set a price upon his head) was gone sound asleep. I will not deny I was tempted with the wish to denounce him; but two thoughts withheld me: one, that if he were thus to end his life upon an honourable scaffold, the man would be canonised for good in the minds of his father and my patron's wife: the other, that if I was anyway mingled in the matter, Mr. Henry himself would scarce escape some glancings of suspicion. And in the meanwhile our enemy went in and out more than I could have thought possible, the fact that he was home again was buzzed about all the countryside; and yet he was never

stirred. Of all these so-many and so-different persons who were acquainted with his presence, none had the least greed (as I used to say, in my annoyance) or the least loyalty ; and the man rode here and there—fully more welcome, considering the lees of old unpopularity, than Mr. Henry—and considering the freetraders, far safer than myself.

Not but what he had a trouble of his own ; and this, as it brought about the gravest consequences, I must now relate. The reader will scarce have forgotten Jessie Brown ; her way of life was much among the smuggling party ; Captain Crail himself was of her intimates ; and she had early word of Mr. Bally's presence at the house. In my opinion she had long ceased to care two straws for the Master's person ; but it was become her habit to connect herself continually with the Master's name ; that was the ground of all her play-acting ; and so, now when he was back, she thought she owed it to herself to grow a haunter of the neighbourhood of Durrisdeer. The Master could scarce go abroad but she was there in wait for him ; a scandalous figure of a woman, not often sober ; hailing him wildly as " her bonny laddie," quoting pedlar's poetry, and as I receive the story, even seeking to weep upon his neck. I own I rubbed my hands over this persecution ; but the Master, who laid so much upon others, was himself the least patient of men. There were strange scenes enacted in the policies. Some say he took his cane to her, and Jessie fell back upon her former

weapon, stones. It is certain at least that he made a motion to Captain Crail to have the woman trepanned, and that the Captain refused the proposition with uncommon vehemence. And the end of the matter was victory for Jessie. Money was got together ; an interview took place in which my proud gentleman must consent to be kissed and wept upon ; and the woman was set up in a public of her own, somewhere on Solway side (but I forget where) and by the only news I ever had of it, extremely ill-frequented.

This is to look forward. After Jessie had been but a little while upon his heels, the Master comes to me one day in the steward's office, and with more civility than usual, "Mackellar," says he, "there is a damned crazy wench comes about here. I cannot well move in the matter myself, which brings me to you. Be so good as see to it : the men must have a strict injunction to drive the wench away."

"Sir," said I trembling a little, "you can do your own dirty errands for yourself."

He said not a word to that, and left the room.

Presently came Mr. Henry. "Here is news!" cried he. "It seems all is not enough, and you must add to my wretchedness. It seems you have insulted Mr. Bally."

"Under your kind favour, Mr. Henry," said I, "it was he that insulted me, and as I think grossly. But I may have been careless of your position when I spoke ;

and if you think so when you know all, my dear patron, you have but to say the word. For you I would obey in any point whatever, even to sin, God pardon me!" And thereupon I told him what had passed.

Mr. Henry smiled to himself; a grimmer smile I never witnessed. "You did exactly well," said he. "He shall drink his Jessie Brown to the dregs." And then, spying the Master outside, he opened the window, and crying to him by the name of Mr. Bally, asked him to step up and have a word.

"James," said he, when our persecutor had come in and closed the door behind him, looking at me with a smile as if he thought I was to be humbled, "you brought me a complaint against Mr. Mackellar into which I have inquired. I need not tell you I would always take his word against yours; for we are alone, and I am going to use something of your own freedom. Mr. Mackellar is a gentleman I value; and you must contrive, so long as you are under this roof, to bring yourself into no more collisions with one whom I will support at any possible cost to me or mine. As for the errand upon which you came to him, you must deliver yourself from the consequences of your own cruelty, and none of my servants shall be at all employed in such a case."

"My father's servants, I believe," says the Master.

"Go to him with this tale," said Mr. Henry.

The Master grew very white. He pointed at me

with his finger. "I want that man discharged," he said.

"He shall not be," said Mr. Henry.

"You shall pay pretty dear for this," says the Master.

"I have paid so dear already for a wicked brother," said Mr. Henry, "that I am bankrupt even of fears. You have no place left where you can strike me."

"I will show you about that," says the Master, and went softly away.

"What will he do next, Mackellar?" cries Mr. Henry.

"Let me go away," said I. "My dear patron, let me go away; I am but the beginning of fresh sorrows."

"Would you leave me quite alone?" said he.

WE were not long in suspense as to the nature of the new assault. Up to that hour, the Master had played a very close game with Mrs. Henry; avoiding pointedly to be alone with her, which I took at the time for an effect of decency, but now think to be a most insidious art; meeting her, you may say, at mealtime only; and behaving, when he did so, like an affectionate brother. Up to that hour, you may say he had scarce directly interfered between Mr. Henry and his wife; except in so far as he had manœuvred the one quite forth from the good graces of the other. Now, all that was to be

changed ; but whether really in revenge, or because he was wearying of Durrisdeer and looked about for some diversion, who but the devil shall decide ?

From that hour at least, began the siege of Mrs. Henry ; a thing so deftly carried on that I scarce know if she was aware of it herself, and that her husband must look on in silence. The first parallel was opened (as was made to appear) by accident. The talk fell, as it did often, on the exiles in France ; so it glided to the matter of their songs.

“ There is one,” says the Master, “ if you are curious in these matters, that has always seemed to me very moving. The poetry is harsh ; and yet, perhaps because of my situation, it has always found the way to my heart. It is supposed to be sung, I should tell you, by an exile’s sweetheart ; and represents, perhaps, not so much the truth of what she is thinking, as the truth of what he hopes of her, poor soul ! in these far lands.” And here the Master sighed. “ I protest it is a pathetic sight when a score of rough Irish, all common sentinels, get to this song ; and you may see by their falling tears, how it strikes home to them. It goes thus, father,” says he, very adroitly taking my lord for his listener, “ and if I cannot get to the end of it, you must think it is a common case with us exiles.” And thereupon he struck up the same air as I had heard the Colonel whistle ; but now to words, rustic indeed, yet most pathetically setting forth a poor girl’s aspirations

for an exiled lover : of which one verse indeed (or something like it) still sticks by me :

O, I will die my petticoat red,
With my dear boy I'll beg my bread,
Though all my friends should wish me dead,
For Willie among the rushes, O!

He sang it well even as a song ; but he did better yet as a performer. I have heard famous actors, when there was not a dry eye in the Edinburgh theatre ; a great wonder to behold ; but no more wonderful than how the Master played upon that little ballad and on those who heard him like an instrument, and seemed now upon the point of failing, and now to conquer his distress, so that it seemed to pour out of his own heart and his own past, and to be aimed direct at Mrs. Henry. And his art went further yet ; for all was so delicately touched, it seemed impossible to suspect him of the least design ; and so far from making a parade of emotion, you would have sworn he was striving to be calm. When it came to an end, we all sat silent for a time ; he had chosen the dusk of the afternoon, so that none could see his neighbour's face ; but it seemed as if we held our breathing, only my old lord cleared his throat. The first to move was the singer, who got to his feet suddenly and softly, and went and walked softly to and fro in the low end of the hall, Mr. Henry's customary place. We were to suppose that he there struggled down the last of his emotion ; for he presently returned and launched into

a disquisition on the nature of the Irish (always so much miscalled, and whom he defended) in his natural voice; so that, before the lights were brought, we were in the usual course of talk. But even then, methought Mrs. Henry's face was a shade pale; and for another thing, she withdrew almost at once.

The next sign was a friendship this insidious devil struck up with innocent Miss Katharine; so that they were always together, hand in hand, or she climbing on his knee, like a pair of children. Like all his diabolical acts, this cut in several ways. It was the last stroke to Mr. Henry, to see his own babe debauched against him; it made him harsh with the poor innocent, which brought him still a peg lower in his wife's esteem; and (to conclude) it was a bond of union between the lady and the Master. Under this influence, their old reserve melted by daily stages. Presently there came walks in the long shrubbery, talks in the Belvedere, and I know not what tender familiarity. I am sure Mrs. Henry was like many a good woman; she had a whole conscience, but perhaps by the means of a little winking. For even to so dull an observer as myself, it was plain her kindness was of a more moving nature than the sisterly. The tones of her voice appeared more numerous; she had a light and softness in her eye; she was more gentle with all of us, even with Mr. Henry, even with myself; methought she breathed of some quiet melancholy happiness.

To look on at this, what a torment it was for Mr. Henry ! And yet it brought our ultimate deliverance, as I am soon to tell.

THE purport of the Master's stay was no more noble (gild it as they might) than to wring money out. He had some design of a fortune in the French Indies, as the Chevalier wrote me ; and it was the sum required for this that he came seeking. For the rest of the family it spelled ruin ; but my lord, in his incredible partiality, pushed ever for the granting. The family was now so narrowed down (indeed there were no more of them than just the father and the two sons), that it was possible to break the entail, and alienate a piece of land. And to this, at first by hints, and then by open pressure, Mr. Henry was brought to consent. He never would have done so, I am very well assured, but for the weight of the distress under which he laboured. But for his passionate eagerness to see his brother gone, he would not thus have broken with his own sentiment and the traditions of his house. And even so, he sold them his consent at a dear rate, speaking for once openly and holding the business up in its own shameful colours.

“ You will observe,” he said, “ this is an injustice to my son, if ever I have one.”

“ But that you are not likely to have,” said my lord.

“ God knows,” says Mr. Henry. “ And considering the cruel falseness of the position in which I stand to

my brother, and that you, my lord, are my father and have the right to command me, I set my hand to this paper. But one thing I will say first : I have been ungenerously pushed, and when next, my lord, you are tempted to compare your sons, I call on you to remember what I have done and what he has done. Acts are the fair test."

My lord was the most uneasy man I ever saw ; even in his old face, the blood came up. "I think this is not a very wisely chosen moment, Henry, for complaints," said he. "This takes away from the merit of your generosity."

"Do not deceive yourself, my lord," said Mr. Henry. "This injustice is not done from generosity to him, but in obedience to yourself."

"Before strangers . . ." begins my lord, still more unhappily affected.

"There is no one but Mackellar here," said Mr. Henry ; "he is my friend. And my lord, as you make him no stranger to your frequent blame, it were hard if I must keep him one to a thing so rare as my defence."

Almost I believe my lord would have rescinded his decision ; but the Master was on the watch.

"Ah, Henry, Henry," says he, "you are the best of us still. Rugged and true ! Ah, man, I wish I was as good."

And at that instance of his favourite's generosity, my lord desisted from his hesitation, and the deed was signed.

As soon as it could be brought about, the land of Ogtherhall was sold for much below its value, and the money paid over to our leech and sent by some private carriage into France. Or so he said; though I have suspected since it did not go so far. And now here was all the man's business brought to a successful head, and his pockets once more bulging with our gold; and yet the point for which we had consented to this sacrifice was still denied us, and the visitor still lingered on at Durrisdeer. Whether in malice, or because the time was not yet come for his adventure to the Indies, or because he had hopes of his design on Mrs. Henry, or from the orders of the government, who shall say? but linger he did and that for weeks.

You will observe I say: from the orders of government; for about this time, the man's disreputable secret trickled out.

The first hint I had was from a tenant, who commented on the Master's stay and yet more on his security; for this tenant was a Jacobitish sympathiser, and had lost a son at Culloden, which gave him the more critical eye. "There is one thing," said he, "that I cannot but think strange; and that is how he got to Cockermouth."

"To Cockermouth?" said I, with a sudden memory of my first wonder on beholding the man disembark so point-de-vice after so long a voyage.

"Why, yes," says the tenant, "it was there he was

picked up by Captain Crail. You thought he had come from France by sea? And so we all did."

I turned this news a little in my head, and then carried it to Mr. Henry. "Here is an odd circumstance," said I, and told him.

"What matters how he came, Mackellar, so long as he is here," groans Mr. Henry.

"No, sir," said I, "but think again! Does not this smack a little of some government connivance? You know how much we have wondered already at the man's security."

"Stop," said Mr. Henry. "Let me think of this." And as he thought, there came that grim smile upon his face that was a little like the Master's. "Give me paper," said he. And he sat without another word and wrote to a gentleman of his acquaintance—I will name no unnecessary names, but he was one in a high place. This letter I despatched by the only hand I could depend upon in such a case, Macconochie's; and the old man rode hard, for he was back with the reply, before even my eagerness had ventured to expect him. Again, as he read it, Mr. Henry had the same grim smile.

"This is the best you have done for me yet, Mackellar," says he. "With this in my hand, I will give him a shog. Watch for us at dinner."

At dinner accordingly, Mr. Henry proposed some very public appearance for the Master; and my lord, as he had hoped, objected to the danger of the course.

“O,” says Mr. Henry, very easily, “you need no longer keep this up with me. I am as much in the secret as yourself.”

“In the secret?” says my lord. “What do you mean, Henry? I give you my word I am in no secret from which you are excluded.”

The Master had changed countenance, and I saw he was struck in a joint of his harness.

“How?” says Mr. Henry, turning to him with a huge appearance of surprise. “I see you serve your masters very faithfully; but I had thought you would have been humane enough to set your father’s mind at rest.”

“What are you talking of? I refuse to have my business publicly discussed. I order this to cease,” cries the Master very foolishly and passionately, and indeed more like a child than a man.

“So much discretion was not looked for at your hands, I can assure you,” continued Mr. Henry. “For see what my correspondent writes”—unfolding the paper—“‘It is, of course, in the interests both of the government and the gentleman whom we may perhaps best continue to call Mr. Bally, to keep this understanding secret; but it was never meant his own family should continue to endure the suspense you paint so feelingly; and I am pleased mine should be the hand to set these fears at rest. Mr. Bally is as safe in Great Britain as yourself.’”

“Is this possible?” cries my lord, looking at his son, with a great deal of wonder and still more of suspicion in his face.

“My dear father,” says the Master, already much recovered, “I am overjoyed that this may be disclosed. My own instructions direct from London bore a very contrary sense, and I was charged to keep the indulgence secret from everyone, yourself not excepted, and indeed yourself expressly named—as I can show in black and white, unless I have destroyed the letter. They must have changed their mind very swiftly, for the whole matter is still quite fresh; or rather Henry’s correspondent must have misconceived that part, as he seems to have misconceived the rest. To tell you the truth, sir,” he continued, getting visibly more easy, “I had supposed this unexplained favour to a rebel was the effect of some application from yourself; and the injunction to secrecy among my family the result of a desire on your part to conceal your kindness. Hence I was the more careful to obey orders. It remains now to guess by what other channel indulgence can have flowed on so notorious an offender as myself; for I do not think your son need defend himself from what seems hinted at in Henry’s letter. I have never yet heard of a Durrisdeer who was a turncoat or a spy,” says he, proudly.

And so it seemed he had swum out of this danger unharmed; but this was to reckon without a blunder he

had made, and without the pertinacity of Mr. Henry, who was now to show he had something of his brother's spirit.

"You say the matter is still fresh," says Mr. Henry.

"It is recent," says the Master, with a fair show of stoutness and yet not without a quaver.

"Is it so recent as that?" asks Mr. Henry, like a man a little puzzled, and spreading his letter forth again.

In all the letter there was no word as to the date; but how was the Master to know that?

"It seemed to come late enough for me," says he, with a laugh. And at the sound of that laugh, which rang false like a cracked bell, my lord looked at him again across the table, and I saw his old lips draw together close.

"No," said Mr. Henry, still glancing on his letter, "but I remember your expression. You said it was very fresh."

And here we had a proof of our victory, and the strongest instance yet of my lord's incredible indulgence; for what must he do but interfere to save his favourite from exposure!

"I think, Henry," says he, with a kind of pitiful eagerness, "I think we need dispute no more. We are all rejoiced at last to find your brother safe; we are all at one on that; and as grateful subjects, we can do no less than drink to the king's health and bounty."

Thus was the Master extricated; but at least he had

been put to his defence, he had come lamely out, and the attraction of his personal danger was now publicly plucked away from him. My lord, in his heart of hearts, now knew his favourite to be a government spy ; and Mrs. Henry (however she explained the tale) was notably cold in her behaviour to the discredited hero of romance. Thus in the best fabric of duplicity, there is some weak point, if we can strike it, which will loosen the whole ; and if, by this fortunate stroke, we had not shaken the idol, who can say how it might have gone with us at the catastrophe ?

And yet at the time we seemed to have accomplished nothing. Before a day or two, he had wiped off the ill-results of his discomfiture, and to all appearance, stood as high as ever. As for my Lord Durrissdeer, he was sunk in parental partiality ; it was not so much love, which should be an active quality, as an apathy and torpor of his other powers ; and forgiveness (so to mis-apply a noble word) flowed from him in sheer weakness, like the tears of senility. Mrs. Henry's was a different case ; and heaven alone knows what he found to say to her or how he persuaded her from her contempt. It is one of the worst things of sentiment, that the voice grows to be more important than the words, and the speaker than that which is spoken. But some excuse the Master must have found, or perhaps he had even struck upon some art to wrest this exposure to his own advantage ; for after a time of coldness, it seemed as if

things went worse than ever between him and Mrs. Henry. They were then constantly together. I would not be thought to cast one shadow of blame, beyond what is due to a half-wilful blindness, on that unfortunate lady ; but I do think, in these last days, she was playing very near the fire ; and whether I be wrong or not in that, one thing is sure and quite sufficient : Mr. Henry thought so. The poor gentleman sat for days in my room, so great a picture of distress that I could never venture to address him ; yet it is to be thought he found some comfort even in my presence and the knowledge of my sympathy. There were times, too, when we talked, and a strange manner of talk it was ; there was never a person named, nor an individual circumstance referred to ; yet we had the same matter in our minds, and we were each aware of it. It is a strange art that can thus be practised : to talk for hours of a thing, and never name nor yet so much as hint at it. And I remember I wondered if it was by some such natural skill that the Master made love to Mrs. Henry all day long (as he manifestly did), yet never startled her into reserve.

To show how far affairs had gone with Mr. Henry, I will give some words of his, uttered (as I have cause not to forget) upon the 26th of February, 1757. It was unseasonable weather, a cast back into Winter : windless, bitter cold, the world all white with rime, the sky low and gray ; the sea black and silent like a quarry

hole. Mr. Henry sat close by the fire and debated (as was now common with him) whether "a man" should "do things," whether "interference was wise," and the like general propositions, which each of us particularly applied. I was by the window looking out, when there passed below me the Master, Mrs. Henry and Miss Katharine, that now constant trio. The child was running to and fro delighted with the frost; the Master spoke close in the lady's ear with what seemed (even from so far) a devilish grace of insinuation; and she on her part looked on the ground like a person lost in listening. I broke out of my reserve.

"If I were you, Mr. Henry," said I, "I would deal openly with my lord."

"Mackellar, Mackellar," said he, "you do not see the weakness of my ground. I can carry no such base thoughts to any one: to my father least of all; that would be to fall into the bottom of his scorn. The weakness of my ground," he continued, "lies in myself, that I am not one who engages love. I have their gratitude, they all tell me that: I have a rich estate of it! But I am not present in their minds; they are moved neither to think with me nor to think for me. There is my loss!" He got to his feet, and trod down the fire. "But some method must be found, Mackellar," said he, looking at me suddenly over his shoulder; "some way must be found. I am a man of a great deal of patience—far too much—far too much. I begin to despise my-

self. And yet sure never was a man involved in such a toil !” He fell back to his brooding.

“Cheer up,” said I. “It will burst of itself.”

“I am far past anger now,” says he, which had so little coherency with my own observation, that I let both fall.

VI.

ACCOUNT OF ALL THAT PASSED ON THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 27TH, 1757.

ON the evening of the interview referred to, the Master went abroad ; he was abroad a great deal of the next day also, that fatal 27th ; but where he went or what he did, we never concerned ourselves to ask until next day. If we had done so, and by any chance found out, it might have changed all. But as all we did was done in ignorance, and should be so judged, I shall so narrate these passages as they appeared to us in the moment of their birth, and reserve all that I since discovered for the time of its discovery. For I have now come to one of the dark parts of my narrative, and must engage the reader's indulgence for my patron.

All the 27th, that rigorous weather endured : a stifling cold ; the folk passing about like smoking chimneys ; the wide hearth in the hall piled high with fuel ; some of the spring birds that had already blundered north into our neighbourhood, besieging the windows of the house or trotting on the frozen turf like things distracted. About noon there came a blink of sunshine ; showing a very pretty, wintry, frosty landscape of white hills and woods, with Crail's lugger waiting for a wind

under the Craig Head, and the smoke mounting straight into the air from every farm and cottage. With the coming of night, the haze closed in overhead ; it fell dark and still and starless and exceeding cold : a night the most unseasonable, fit for strange events.

Mrs. Henry withdrew, as was now her custom, very early. We had set ourselves of late to pass the evening with a game of cards ; another mark that our visitor was wearying mightily of the life at Durrisdeer ; and we had not been long at this, when my old lord slipped from his place beside the fire, and was off without a word to seek the warmth of bed. The three of us thus left together had neither love nor courtesy to share ; not one of us would have sat up one instant to oblige another ; yet from the influence of custom and as the cards had just been dealt, we continued the form of playing out the round. I should say we were late sitters ; and though my lord had departed earlier than was his custom, twelve was already gone some time upon the clock, and the servants long ago in bed. Another thing I should say, that although I never saw the Master anyway affected with liquor, he had been drinking freely and was perhaps (although he showed it not) a trifle heated.

Anyway, he now practised one of his transitions ; and so soon as the door closed behind my lord, and without the smallest change of voice, shifted from ordinary civil talk into a stream of insult.

“My dear Henry, it is yours to play,” he had been saying, and now continued : “It is a very strange thing how, even in so small a matter as a game of cards, you display your rusticity. You play, Jacob, like a bonnet laird, or a sailor in a tavern. The same dulness, the same petty greed, *cette lenteur d’hébété qui me fait rager*; it is strange I should have such a brother. Even Squaretoes has a certain vivacity when his stake is imperilled ; but the dreariness of a game with you, I positively lack language to depict.”

Mr. Henry continued to look at his cards, as though very maturely considering some play ; but his mind was elsewhere.

“Dear God, will this never be done ?” cries the Master. “*Quel lourdeau !* But why do I trouble you with French expressions, which are lost on such an ignora-mus ? A *lourdeau*, my dear brother, is as we might say a bumpkin, a clown, a clodpole : a fellow without grace, lightness, quickness ; any gift of pleasing, any natural brilliancy : such a one as you shall see, when you desire, by looking in the mirror. I tell you these things for your good I assure you ; and besides, Squaretoes,” (looking at me and stifling a yawn) “it is one of my diversions in this very dreary spot, to toast you and your master at the fire like chestnuts. I have great pleasure in your case for I observe the nickname (rustic as it is) has always the power to make you writhe. But sometimes I have more trouble with this dear fellow here, who seems

to have gone to sleep upon his cards. Do you not see the applicability of the epithet I have just explained, dear Henry? Let me show you. For instance, with all those solid qualities which I delight to recognize in you, I never knew a woman who did not prefer me—nor, I think,” he continued, with the most silken deliberation, “I think—who did not continue to prefer me.”

Mr. Henry laid down his cards. He rose to his feet very softly, and seemed all the while like a person in deep thought. “You coward!” he said gently, as if to himself. And then, with neither hurry nor any particular violence, he struck the Master in the mouth.

The Master sprang to his feet like one transfigured; I had never seen the man so beautiful. “A blow!” he cried. “I would not take a blow from God Almighty.”

“Lower your voice,” said Mr. Henry. “Do you wish my father to interfere for you again?”

“Gentlemen, gentlemen,” I cried, and sought to come between them.

The Master caught me by the shoulder, held me at arm’s length, and still addressing his brother: “Do you know what this means?” said he.

“It was the most deliberate act of my life,” says Mr. Henry.

“I must have blood, I must have blood for this,” says the Master.

“Please God it shall be yours,” said Mr. Henry; and he went to the wall and took down a pair of swords that

hung there with others, naked. These he presented to the Master by the points. "Mackellar shall see us play fair," said Mr. Henry. "I think it very needful."

"You need insult me no more," said the Master, taking one of the swords at random. "I have hated you all my life."

"My father is but newly gone to bed," said Mr. Henry. "We must go somewhere forth of the house."

"There is an excellent place in the long shrubbery," said the Master.

"Gentlemen," said I, "shame upon you both ! Sons of the same mother, would you turn against the life she gave you ?"

"Even so, Mackellar," said Mr. Henry, with the same perfect quietude of manner he had shown throughout.

"It is what I will prevent," said I.

And now there is a blot upon my life ; at these words of mine, the Master turned his blade against my bosom ; I saw the light run along the steel ; and I threw up my arms and fell to my knees before him on the floor. "No, no," I cried, like a baby.

"We shall have no more trouble with him," said the Master. "It is a good thing to have a coward in the house."

"We must have light," said Mr. Henry, as though there had been no interruption.

"This trembler can bring a pair of candles," said the Master.

To my shame be it said, I was still so blinded with the flashing of that bare sword, that I volunteered to bring a lantern.

“We do not need a l-l-lantern,” says the Master, mocking me. “There is no breath of air. Come, get to your feet, take a pair of lights, and go before. I am close behind with this—” making the blade glitter as he spoke.

I took up the candlesticks and went before them, steps that I would give my hand to recall; but a coward is a slave at the best; and even as I went, my teeth smote each other in my mouth. It was as he had said, there was no breath stirring: a windless stricture of frost had bound the air; and as we went forth in the shine of the candles, the blackness was like a roof over our heads. Never a word was said, there was never a sound but the creaking of our steps along the frozen path. The cold of the night fell about me like a bucket of water; I shook as I went with more than terror; but my companions bare-headed like myself and fresh from the warm hall, appeared not even conscious of the change.

“Here is the place,” said the Master. “Set down the candles.”

I did as he bid me, and presently the flames went up as steady as in a chamber in the midst of the frosted trees, and I beheld these two brothers take their places.

"The light is something in my eyes," said the Master.

"I will give you every advantage," replied Mr. Henry, shifting his ground, "for I think you are about to die." He spoke rather sadly than otherwise, yet there was a ring in his voice.

"Henry Durie," said the Master, "two words before I begin. You are a fencer, you can hold a foil; you little know what a change it makes to hold a sword! And by that I know you are to fall. But see how strong is my situation! If you fall, I shift out of this country to where my money is before me. If I fall, where are you? My father, your wife who is in love with me—as you very well know—your child even who prefers me to yourself:—how will these avenge me! Had you thought of that, dear Henry?" He looked at his brother with a smile; then made a fencing from salute.

Never a word said Mr. Henry, but saluted too, and the swords rang together.

I am no judge of the play, my head besides was gone with cold and fear and horror; but it seems they were long at it, and played with caution rather than fury. Neither gave an inch for a great while; then the Master leaped back with a little sobbing oath; and I believe the movement brought the light once more against his eyes. To it they went again, on the fresh ground; but now methought closer, Mr. Henry pressing more imperiously,

the Master beyond doubt with shaken confidence. For it is beyond doubt he now recognised himself for lost, and had some taste of the cold agony of fear ; or he had never attempted the foul stroke. I cannot say I followed it, my untrained eye was never quick enough to seize details, but it appears he caught his brother's blade with his left hand, a practice not permitted. Certainly Mr. Henry only saved himself by leaping on one side ; as certainly the Master, lunging in the air, stumbled on his knee, and before he could move, the sword was through his body.

I cried out with a stifled scream, and ran in ; but the body was already fallen to the ground, where it writhed a moment like a trodden worm, and then lay motionless.

“Look at his left hand,” said Mr. Henry.

“It is all bloody,” said I.

“On the inside ?” says he.

“It is cut on the inside,” said I.

“I thought so,” said he, and turned his back.

I opened the man's clothes ; my hand was as steady as ever, and all my fear fallen from me ; nothing left but a great commiseration. The heart was quite still, it gave not a flutter.

“God forgive us, Mr. Henry,” said I. “He is quite dead.”

“Dead ?” he repeated, a little stupidly ; and then with a rising tone, “Dead ? dead ?” says he, and suddenly cast his bloody sword upon the ground.

“What must we do?” said I. “Be yourself, sir. It is too late now : you must be yourself.”

He turned and stared at me. “O, Mackellar!” says he, and put his face in his hands.

I plucked him by the coat. “For God’s sake, for all our sakes, be more courageous!” said I. “What must we do?”

He showed me his face with the same stupid stare. “Do?” says he. And with that his eye fell on the body, and “O!” he cries out, with his hand to his brow, as if he had never remembered; and turning from me, made off towards the house of Durrisdeer at a strange stumbling run.

I stood a moment mused; then it seemed to me my duty lay most plain on the side of the living; and I ran after him, leaving the candles on the frosty ground and the body lying in their light under the trees. But run as I pleased, he had the start of me, and was got into the house, and up to the hall, where I found him standing before the fire with his face once more in his hands, and as he so stood, he visibly shuddered.

“Mr. Henry, Mr. Henry,” I said, “this will be the ruin of us all.”

“What is this that I have done?” cries he, and then, looking upon me with a countenance that I shall never forget, “Who is to tell the old man?” he said.

The word knocked at my heart; but it was no time for weakness. I went and poured him out a glass of

brandy. "Drink that," said I, "drink it down." And I forced him to swallow it like a child. "And now," said I, "to business."

"It has to be told, Mackellar," said he. "It must be told." And he fell suddenly in a seat—my old lord's seat by the chimney side—and was shaken with dry sobs.

I began to feel dismay come upon my soul; it was plain there was no help in Mr. Henry. "Well," said I, "sit there, and leave all to me." And taking another candle in my hand, I set forth out of the room in the dark house. There was no movement; I must suppose that all had gone unobserved; and I was now to consider how to smuggle through the rest with the like happy secrecy. It was no hour for any scruples of decency; and I opened my lady's door without so much as a knock, and passed boldly in.

"Mr. Mackellar!" says she, sitting up in bed.

"Madam," said I, "I will go forth again into the passage; and do you get as quickly as you can into some clothes. There is much to be done."

She troubled me with no questions, nor did she keep me waiting. Ere I had time to prepare a word of that which I must say to her, she was on the threshold signing me to enter.

"There is some calamity happened," said she.

"Madam," said I, "if you cannot be very brave, I must go elsewhere; for if no one helps me tonight, there is an end of the house of Durrisdeer."

"I am very courageous," said she.

"I think so," said I, holding up the candle to scrutinise her face ; "I pray God so !" I set down the light upon the chimney. "And another thing, Mrs. Henry," I added, pointing at her with my finger : "when so much is lost already, we can do no more but save what remains. The best now is very little ; you and I must try for it."

"I will, Mackellar, good Mackellar," said she. "But no more suspense !" and she laid her hand on my shoulder and looked up at me with a sort of smile, very painful for me to see, but very brave too.

"It has come to a duel," said I.

"A duel ?" she repeated. "A duel ! Henry and
. . . ."

"And the Master," said I. "Things have been borne so long, things of which you know nothing, which you would not believe if I should tell. But to-night it went too far, and when he insulted your
. . . ."

"Stop," said she. "He ? Who ?"

"O, madam !" cried I, my bitterness breaking forth, "do you ask me such a question ? Indeed, then, I may go elsewhere for help : there is none here."

"I do not know in what I have offended you," said she. "Forgive me ; put me out of this suspense."

But I dared not tell her yet ; I felt not sure of her ; and at the doubt and under the sense of impotence it

brought with it, I turned on the poor woman with something near to anger.

“Madam,” said I, “we are speaking of two men : one of them insulted you, and you ask me which. I will help you to the answer. With one of these men you have spent all your hours : has the other reproached you ? To one, you have been always kind ; to the other, as God sees me and judges between us two, I think not always : has his love ever failed you ? To-night, one of these two men told the other, in my hearing—the hearing of a hired stranger, that you were in love with him. Before I say one word, you shall answer your own question : Which was it ? Nay, madam, you shall answer me another : If it has come to this dreadful end, whose fault is it ?”

“What has happened ?” said she.

“You are not fit to hear,” said I. “Whatever it was, you shall say first it was your fault.”

“O !” she cried, with a little gesture of wringing her hands, “this man will drive me mad ! Can you not put *me* out of your thoughts ?”

“I think not once of you,” I cried. “I think of none but my dear unhappy Master.”

“Good God,” said she, with her hand to her heart, “has he killed him ? Is Henry dead ?”

“No,” said I, “the other.”

And then we stood awhile silent, not looking on each other.

“It was a fight indeed?” she whispered. “It was not a . . . ?” and she paused upon the word.

“It was a fair fight on my dear Master’s part,” said I. “As for the other, he was slain in the very act of a foul stroke.”

“How you hate him!” said she.

“Madam,” said I, “hatred of that man glows in my bosom like a burning fire; ay, even now he is dead. God knows, I would have stopped the fighting, had I dared. It is my shame I did not. But when I saw him fall, if I could have spared one thought pitying of my Master, it had been to exult in that deliverance.”

I do not know if she marked; but her next words were: “And my lord?”

“That shall be my part,” said I.

“You will not speak to him as you have to me?” she asked.

“Madam,” said I, “have you not some one else to think of? Leave my lord to me.”

“Some one else?” she repeated.

“Your husband,” said I. She looked at me with a countenance illegible. “Are you going to turn your back on him?” I asked.

Still she looked at me; then her hand went to her heart again. “No,” said she.

“God bless you for that word!” I said. “Go to him now where he sits in the hall; speak to him—it matters not what you say; give him your hand; say, ‘I know

all';—if God gives you grace enough, say 'Forgive me.' ”

“Nay,” said she, “may God forgive us all, and you not least, Mr. Mackellar, for a harsh judger and a cruel tongue.”

“Pray rather I may be helped in what remains to do,” said I. “For it seems to me that I am innocent of the least offence in this matter and yet have the most dreadful part of it.”

“You say very true, Mr. Mackellar,” said she. “God strengthen you—from my heart!—and make you merciful. I will go to my husband; I shall not be more backward in my duty than yourself, and I will try to be more kind.”

“Let me light you there,” said I, taking up the candle.

“I will find my way in the dark,” she said, with a little shiver, and I think the shiver was at me.

So we separated, she downstairs to where a little light glimmered in the hall door, I along the passage to my lord's room. It seems hard to say why, but I could not burst in on the old man as I could on the young woman; with whatever reluctance, I must knock. But his old slumbers were light, or perhaps he slept not; and at the first summons, I was bidden enter.

He too sat up in bed; very aged and bloodless he looked; and whereas he had a certain largeness of appearance when dressed for daylight, he now seemed frail

and little, and his face (the wig being laid aside) not bigger than a child's. This daunted me ; nor less, the haggard surmise of misfortune in his eye. Yet his voice was even peaceful as he inquired my errand. I set my candle down upon a chair, leaned on the bed foot, and looked at him.

“ Lord Durrisdeer,” said I, “ it is very well known to you that I am a partisan in your family.”

“ I hope we are none of us partisans,” said he. “ That you love my son sincerely, I have always been glad to recognize.”

“ O, my lord, we are past the hour of these civilities,” I replied. “ If we are to save anything out of the fire, we must look the fact in its bare countenance. A partisan I am ; partisans we have all been ; it is as a partisan that I am here in the middle of the night to plead before you. Hear me ; before I go, I will tell you why.”

“ I would always hear you, Mr. Mackellar,” said he, “ and that at any hour whether of the day or night, for I would be always sure you had a reason. You spoke once before to very proper purpose ; I have not forgotten that.”

“ I am here to plead the cause of my master,” I said. “ I need not tell you how he acts. You know how he is placed. You know with what generosity he has always met your other—met your wishes,” I corrected myself, stumbling at that name of son. You know—

you must know—what he has suffered—what he has suffered about his wife.”

“Mr. Mackellar!” cried my lord, rising in bed like a bearded lion.

“You said you would hear me,” I continued. “What you do not know, what you should know, one of the things I am here to speak of—is the persecution he must bear in private. Your back is not turned, before one whom I dare not name to you falls upon him with the most unfeeling taunts; twits him—pardon me, my lord! twits him with your partiality, calls him Jacob, calls him clown, pursues him with ungenerous raillery, not to be borne by man. And let but one of you appear, instantly he changes; and my master must smile and courtesy to the man who has been feeding him with insults; I know—for I have shared in some of it, and I tell you the life is insupportable. All these months, it has endured; it began with the man’s landing; it was by the name of Jacob that my master was greeted the first night.”

My lord made a movement as if to throw aside the clothes and rise. “If there be any truth in this . . .” said he.

“Do I look like a man lying?” I interrupted, checking him with my hand.

“You should have told me at first,” he said.

“Ah, my lord, indeed I should, and you may well hate the face of this unfaithful servant!” I cried.

“I will take order,” said he, “at once.” And again made the movement to rise.

Again I checked him. “I have not done,” said I. “Would God I had! All this my dear, unfortunate patron has endured without help or countenance. Your own best word, my lord, was only gratitude. O, but he was your son too! He had no other father. He was hated in the country, God knows how unjustly. He had a loveless marriage. He stood on all hands without affection or support, dear, generous, ill-fated, noble earth!”

“Your tears do you much honour and me much shame,” says my lord with a palsied trembling. “But you do me some injustice. Henry has been ever dear to me, very dear. James (I do not deny it, Mr. Mackellar) James is perhaps dearer; you have not seen my James in quite a favourable light; he has suffered under his misfortunes; and we can only remember how great and how unmerited these were. And even now his is the more affectionate nature. But I will not speak of him. All that you say of Henry is most true; I do not wonder, I know him to be very magnanimous; you will say I trade upon the knowledge? It is possible; these are dangerous virtues, virtues that tempt the encroacher. Mr. Mackellar, I will make it up to him; I will take order with all this. I have been weak; and what is worse, I have been dull.”

“I must not hear you blame yourself, my lord, with

that which I have yet to tell upon my conscience," I replied. "You have not been weak: you have been abused by a devilish dissembler. You saw yourself how he had deceived you in the matter of his danger; he has deceived you throughout in every step of his career. I wish to pluck him from your heart; I wish to force your eyes upon your other son: ah, you have a son there."

"No, no," said he, "two sons—I have two sons."

I made some gesture of despair that struck him; he looked at me with a changed face. "There is much worse behind?" he asked, his voice dying as it rose upon the question.

"Much worse," I answered. "This night he said these words to Mr. Henry: 'I have never known a woman who did not prefer me to you, and I think who did not continue to prefer me.'"

"I will hear nothing against my daughter," he cried; and from his readiness to stop me in this direction, I conclude his eyes were not so dull as I had fancied, and he had looked on not without anxiety upon the siege of Mrs. Henry.

"I think not of blaming her," cried I. "It is not that. These words were said, in my hearing, to Mr. Henry; and if you find them not yet plain enough, these others but a little after: 'Your wife who is in love with me.'"

"They have quarrelled?" he said.

I nodded.

“I must fly to them,” he said, beginning once again to leave his bed.

“No, no !” I cried, holding forth my hands.

“You do not know,” said he. “These are dangerous words.”

“Will nothing make you understand, my lord ?” said I.

“No ?” said he ; and his eyes and his face and his clasped hands asked me the truth.

I flung myself on my knees by the bedside. “O my lord,” cried I, “think on him you have left, think of this poor sinner whom you begot, whom your wife bore to you, whom we have none of us strengthened as we could ; think of him, not of yourself ; he is the other sufferer—think of him ! That is the door for sorrow, Christ’s door, God’s door : O, it stands open. Think of him, even as he thought of you. Who is to tell the old man?—these were his words. It was for that I came ; that is why I am here pleading at your feet.”

“O, Mackellar, my two boys !” says he.

“You have one still,” I cried.

He whimpered for a little, not sobbed. Then he looked for his handkerchief, which he was a long time finding, and particularly dried his eyes. “It is all my doing,” he said. “I am punished where I sinned. But you are very right ; I must not think of this old carcase ; I must think of Henry.”

I got to my feet again like one that dreams, abashed that I should have displayed emotion more violent than the father's. I beheld him with a wonder I could not hide. I had looked for him to die under the blow ; and he bore it with more constancy than he had received the news of his son's safety. But the nature of these lovers of placidity was always strange to me ; and there is an old man's eyesight in the moral as well as the material world.

"Where did they fight?" was his next word, still somewhat whiningly.

I thought it notable how he never questioned their loyalty, as Mrs. Henry did ; and I would rather have died than told him of the coward stroke.

"In the shrubbery," said I.

"What have you done with the body?" he asked.

"I have left it lying," said I, "beside the candles."

"Candles?" he cried, with a more spirited briskness than I had ever remarked upon his lips. "This is highly imprudent." And with that he ran to the window, opened it, and looked abroad. "See!" said he, "there is a glimmer visible from even here. It might be spied from the road."

"Where none goes by at such an hour," I objected.

"It makes no matter," he said. "One might. Hark!" cries he, "what is that?"

It was a sound of men very guardedly rowing in the bay ; and I told him so.

“The freetraders,” said my lord. “Run at once, Mackellar, put these candles out. I will dress in the meanwhile ; and when you return, we can debate on what is wisest.”

I groped my way downstairs, and out at the door. From quite a far way off a sheen was visible, making points of brightness in the shrubbery ; in so black a night, it might have been remarked for miles ; and I blamed myself bitterly for my incaution : How much more sharply when I reached the place ! One of the candlesticks was overthrown, and that taper quenched. The other burned steadily by itself, and made a broad space of light upon the frosted ground. All within that circle seemed, by the force of contrast and the overhanging blackness, brighter than by day. And there was the blood-stain in the midst ; and a little further off Mr. Henry’s sword, the pommel of which was of silver ; but of the body, not a trace. My heart thumped upon my ribs, the hair stirred upon my scalp, as I stood there staring : so strange was the sight, so dire the fears it wakened. I looked right and left ; the ground was so hard it told no story. I stood and listened till my ears ached, but the night was hollow about me like an empty church ; not even a ripple stirred upon the shore ; it seemed you might have heard a pin drop in the county.

I put the candle out, and the blackness fell about me groping dark ; it was like a crowd surrounding me ; and I went back to the house of Durrisdeer, with my chin

upon my shoulder, startling as I went with craven suppositions. In the door a figure moved to meet me, and I had near screamed with terror ere I recognized Mrs. Henry.

“Have you told him?” says she.

“It was he who sent me,” said I. “It is gone. But why are you here?”

“It is gone!” she repeated. “What is gone?”

“The body,” said I. “Why are you not with your husband?”

“Gone?” said she. “Impossible! You cannot have looked. Come, let us go together.”

“There is no light now,” said I. “I dare not.”

“I can see in the dark. I have been standing here so long, so long,” said she. “Come; give me your arm; you need not be afraid with me.”

We returned to the shrubbery arm in arm, and to the fatal place.

“Take care of the blood,” said I.

“Blood?” she cried, and—

“I suppose it will be,” said I. “I am like a blind man.”

“No,” said she, “nothing! Have you not dreamed?”

“Ah, would to God we had!” cried I.

She laid her hand upon my arm. “Continue to be brave,” said she, “for you and I must help each other.”

Presently she spied the sword, picked it up, and let it fall again with her hands thrown wide. “Ah!” she

cried, "blood!" And then with an instant courage, handled it the second time and thrust it to the hilt into the frozen ground. "I will take it back and clean it properly," says she. "But this body? Are you certain he was dead?"

"There was no flutter of his heart," said I, and then remembering: "Why are you not with your husband?"

"It is no use," said she: "no use, Mr. Mackellar; I have forfeited that right; he will not speak to me."

"Not speak to you?" I repeated. "O, you have not tried!"

"I know you think you have a right to doubt me," she replied with a gentle dignity; "but I will prove to you before I have done that I am more worthy of your pity."

At this, for the first time, I was seized with sorrow for her. "God knows, madam," I cried, "God knows I am not so hard as I appear; on this dreadful night, who can veneer his words? But I am a friend to all who are not Henry Durie's enemies!"

"It is hard, then, you should hesitate about his wife," said she. "But here is my hand, Mr. Mackellar, if you will take it; for I think you have a loyal nature."

I gave her mine with a sudden warmth of friendship; for I saw all at once, like the rending of a veil, how nobly she had borne this unnatural calamity, and how generously my reproaches.

"We must go back and tell this to my lord," said I: "this about the body."

“Him I cannot face,” she cried.

“You will find him the least moved of all of us,” said I.

“And yet I could not face him,” said she.

“Well,” said I, “you can return to Mr. Henry ; I will see my lord.”

As we walked back, I bearing the candlesticks, she the sword—a strange burthen for that woman—she had another thought. “Should we tell Henry ?” she asked.

“Let my lord decide,” said I.

My lord was nearly dressed when I came to his chamber. He heard me with a frown. “The freetraders,” said he. “But whether dead or alive ?”

“I thought him—” said I, and paused ashamed of the word.

“I know ; but you may very well have been in error. Why should they remove him, if not living ?” he asked. “O, here is a great dawn of hope. It must be given out that he departed—as he came—without any note of preparation. We must save all scandal.”

I saw he had fallen like the rest of us, to think mainly of the house. Now that all the living members of the family were plunged in irremediable sorrow, it was strange how we turned to that conjoint abstraction of the family itself, and sought to bolster up the airy nothing of its reputation : not the Duries only, but the hired steward himself.

“Are we to tell Mr. Henry ?” I asked him.

“I will see,” said he. “I am going first to visit him, then I go forth with you to view the shrubbery and consider.”

We went downstairs into the hall. Mr. Henry sat by the table with his head upon his hand, like a man of stone. His wife stood a little back from him, her hand at her mouth; and she made us a quick signal of defeat: it was plain she could not move him. My old lord walked very steadily up to where his son was sitting; he had a very steady countenance too, but methought a little cold; when he was come quite up, he held out both his hands, and said: “My son!”

With a broken, strangled cry, Mr. Henry leaped up and fell on his father's neck, crying and weeping, the most pitiful sight that ever a man witnessed. “O father,” he cried, “you know I loved him; you know I loved him in the beginning; I could have died for him—you know that! I would have given my life for him and you. O say, you know that! O say you can forgive me! O father, father, what have I done, what have I done? and we used to be bairns together. O, he was a bonny lad!” and wept and sobbed, and fondled the old man and clutched him about the neck, with the passion of a child in terror.

And then he caught sight of his wife, you would have thought for the first time, where she stood weeping to hear him; and in a moment had fallen at her knees. “And O my lass,” he cried, “you must forgive me too!

Not your husband—I have only been the ruin of your life. But you knew me when I was a lad ; there was no harm in Henry Durie then ; he meant aye to be a friend to you. It's him—it's the old bairn that played with you—O can ye never, never forgive him ? ”

Throughout all this, my lord was like a cold kind spectator with his wits about him. At the first cry, which was indeed enough to call the house about us, he had said to me over his shoulder, “Close the door.” And now he nodded to himself like one satisfied.

“He will do now,” says he. “We may leave him to his wife. Bring a light, Mr. Mackellar.”

Upon my going forth again with my lord, I was aware of a strange phenomenon ; for though it was quite dark, and the night not yet old, methought I smelt the morning. At the same time, there went a tossing through the branches of the evergreens, so that they sounded like a quiet sea ; and the air puffed at times against our faces and the flame of the candle shook. We made the more speed, I believe, being surrounded by this bustle ; visited the scene of the duel, where my lord looked upon the blood with stoicism ; and passing farther on along the path, came at last upon some evidences of the truth. For first of all, where there was a pool across the path, the ice had been trodden in, plainly by more than a man's weight ; next, and but a little further, a young tree was broken ; and down by the landing place, where the traders' boats

were usually beached, another stain of blood marked where the body must have been infallibly set down to rest the bearers.

This stain we set ourselves to wash away with the sea water, carrying it in my lord's hat ; and as we were thus engaged, there came up a sudden moaning gust, moaning like the wind in a ship's rigging, and left us instantly benighted.

"It will come to snow," says my lord ; "and the best thing that we could hope. Let us go back now ; we can do nothing in the dark."

As we went houseward, the wind being again subsided, we were aware of a strong pattering noise about us in the night ; and when we issued from the shelter of the trees, we found it raining smartly.

Throughout the whole of this, my lord's clearness of mind no less than his activity of body, had not ceased to minister to my amazement. He set the course upon it, in the council we held on our return. The freetraders had certainly secured the Master, though whether dead or alive we were still left to our conjectures ; the rain would, long before day, wipe out all marks of the transaction ; by this, we must profit : the Master had unexpectedly come after the fall of night, it must now be given out he had as suddenly departed before the break of day ; and to make all this plausible, it now only remained for me to mount into the man's chamber, pack and conceal his baggage. True, we still lay at the

discretion of the traders ; but that was the incurable weakness of our guilt.

I heard him as I said with wonder, and hastened to obey. Mr. and Mrs. Henry were gone from the hall ; my lord, for warmth's sake, hurried to his bed ; there was still no sign of stir among the servants ; and as I went up the tower stair, and entered the dead man's room, a horror of solitude weighed upon my mind. To my extreme surprise, it was all in the disorder of departure. Of his three portmanteaux, two were ready locked, the third lay open and near full. At once there flashed upon me some suspicion of the truth. The man had been going after all ; he had but waited upon Crail, as Crail waited upon the wind ; early in the night, the seamen had perceived the weather changing ; the boat had come to give notice of the change, and call the passenger aboard, and the boat's crew had stumbled on him lying in his blood. Nay, and there was more behind. This prearranged departure shed some light upon his inconceivable insult of the night before ; it was a parting shot ; hatred being no longer checked by policy. And for another thing, the nature of that insult, and the conduct of Mrs. Henry, pointed to one conclusion : which I have never verified, and can now never verify until the great assize : the conclusion that he had at last forgotten himself, had gone too far in his advances, and had been rebuffed. It can never be verified, as I say ; but as I thought of it that morning among his

baggage, the thought was sweet to me like honey ; and I set it down here because I believe it was the truth, and because (in case it be the truth) it is due to Mrs. Henry.

Into the open portmanteau, I dipped a little ere I closed it. The most beautiful lace and linen, many suits of those fine plain clothes in which he loved to appear : a book or two, and those of the best, Cæsar's *Commentaries*, a volume of Mr. Hobbes, the *Henriade* of M. de Voltaire, a book upon the Indies, one on the mathematics, far beyond where I have studied : these were what I observed with very mingled feelings. But in the open portmanteau, no papers of any description. This set me musing. It was possible the man was dead ; but since the traders had carried him away, not likely. It was possible he might still die of his wound ; but it was also possible he might not. And in this latter case, I was determined to have the means of defence.

One after another I carried his portmanteaux to a loft in the top of the house which we kept locked ; went to my own room for my keys ; and returning to the loft, had the gratification to find two that fitted pretty well. In one of the portmanteaux, there was a shagreen letter case, which I cut open with my knife ; and thenceforth (so far as any credit went) the man was at my mercy. Here was a vast deal of gallant correspondence, chiefly of his Paris days ; and what was far more to the purpose, here were the copies of his own reports to the English secre-

tary, and the originals of the secretary's answers : a most damning series : such as to publish, would be to wreck the Master's honor and to set a price upon his life. I chuckled to myself as I ran through the documents ; I rubbed my hands, I sang aloud in my glee. Day found me at the pleasing task ; nor did I then remit my diligence, except in so far as I went to the window—looked out for a moment, to see the frost quite gone, the world turned black again, and the rain and the wind driving on the bay—and to assure myself that the lugger was gone from its anchorage, and the Master (whether dead or alive) now tumbling on the Irish sea.

It is proper I should add in this place the very little I have subsequently angled out upon the doings of that night. It took me a long while to gather it ; for we dared not openly ask, and the freetraders regarded me with enmity, if not with scorn. It was near six months before we even knew for certain that the man survived ; and it was years before I learned from one of Crail's men, turned publican on his ill-gotten gain, some details which smack to me of truth. It seems the traders found the Master struggled on one elbow, and now staring round him, and now gazing at the candle or at his hand which was all bloodied, like a man stupid. Upon their coming, he would seem to have found his mind, bade them carry him aboard and hold their tongues ; and on the captain asking how he had come

in such a pickle, replied with a great burst of passionate swearing, and immediately fainted. They held some debate : but they were now momentarily looking for a wind, they were highly paid to smuggle him to France, and did not care to delay. Besides which he was well enough liked by these abominable wretches ; they supposed him under capital sentence, knew not in what mischief he might have got his wound, and judged it a piece of good-nature to remove him out of the way of danger. So he was taken aboard, recovered on the passage over, and was set ashore a convalescent at the Havre-du-grace. What is truly notable : he said not a word to anyone of the duel, and not a trader knows to this day in what quarrel or by the hand of what adversary, he fell. With any other man, I should have set this down to natural decency : with this man, I attribute it to pride. He could not bear to avow, perhaps even to himself, that he had been vanquished by one whom he had so much insulted and whom he so cruelly despised.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE.

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THE SILVERADO SQUATTERS.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES.

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